The Japanese Art of Listening

An ethnographic investigation into the role of the listener

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

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This project investigates the art of listening in Japan through ethnographic observation of hostesses (escorts) and listening volunteers, and an analysis of self-help literature on listening.

At night clubs in Tokyo, hostesses, who are famous for being good listeners, use listening as a streetwise skill. This enables them to stay in subordinate and supportive positions, and to help customers dominate a conversation. The customers can gain a sense of recognition, enhance intimate relationships with the hostesses or rebuild their masculinity. Hostesses' listening is 'an interactional weapon of the weak', gaining money, business connections and prestige, but this, in turn, intensifies the gendered division of labour in interactions. By contrast, listening volunteers – who converse with elderly people using listening as a tool for reaching out – sometimes fall short in conversation, not realising that their listening functions as a gift. This forces clients to stay in helpee/subordinate positions and makes them feel obliged to reciprocate. Listening here can be 'a mask for silent authority'. Superficially these two cases do not resemble each other; however, both deal with power dynamics.

Their other common aspect is performing emotional labour. These listeners suppress or discard their feelings – such as disgust or boredom – and generate socially required emotions like respect or compassion, whilst displaying situationally expected listening behaviour. They hope to generate a certain state of mind in others to a greater or lesser extent, and so must perform emotional labour. Listening is therefore a subset of emotional labour.

Self-help guides implicitly instruct emotional labour, and tacitly suggest dealing with power relations by introducing therapeutic listening for superiors and 'zealous listening' (my term) for subordinates.

As my analyses show, listening is not simply a skill of hearing or understanding others, but also a way of associating with them. Therefore, listening is an 'art', which requires both fundamental skills, *and* a listener's own personal way of relating to others.

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Glossary of key Japanese words

Romanised Japanese	Japanese	Meaning
kiku	きく、聞く、聴く	Listening, hearing and asking
kiku	訊く	Asking
kiku	利く	Distinguishing smell or taste
hostess	ホステス	A female escort, especially one who drinks alcohol and offers pleasurable conversations to customers
keichō	傾聴	Active listening, AL
keichō borantia	傾聴ボランティア	Active listening volunteering
chikara, or ...-ryoku	力	Power, competency, or the ability of ...
ningen kankei	人間関係	Interpersonal relationship
unazuki	うなずき	Head nodding
aizuchi	あいづち	Minimal response or interjection
kikite ni yoru kikite-teki kōdō	聴き手による聞き手的行動	Listeners' responses as hearers (Den 2009)
kikite ni yoru hanashite-teki kōdō	聴き手による話し手的行動	Listeners' responses as speakers (Den 2009)
kōinshō	好印象	A favourable impression
ōmu-gaeshi	オウム返し	Echoing or reflecting
kyōkan, kyōkan teki rikai	共感、共感的理解	Empathy or empathetic understanding
dōkan, *dōjō*	同感、同情	Sympathy
yorisou (verb), *yorisoi* (noun)	寄り添う，寄り添い	Getting close enough to be in physical contact, standing by, emotionally snuggling up, accepting what is said unconditionally, or reading and feeling a speaker's emotions
mujōken no juyō	無条件の受容	Unconditional positive regard
jiko ittchi	自己一致	Congruence or maintaining the consistency of one's own self
kawaii	かわいい	Cute
kiki jōzu	聞き（聴き）上手	A good listener
kyabakura	キャバクラ	Cabaret clubs
omizu-ppoi	お水っぽい	Looking like a woman working in the night entertainment business
kurofuku	黒服	A concierge working in hostess clubs, the term literally means a black tie.
dōhan, dōhan shukkin	同伴、同伴出勤	Having dinner with a client before going to a hostess club and coming to the club before 8.30 pm
kaigo	介護	Caring and nursing
omotenashi	おもてなし	Japanese ways of hospitality
Mama	ママ	An owner hostess of a club
uriage hostess	売上ホステス	A self-employed hostess who has a number of customers and works on commission. Literarily meaning 'a sales hostess'
help hostess	ヘルプホステス	A part-time hostess
tantō hostess, (kakari or *eikyū shimei*)	担当ホステス（係り、永久指名）	A hostess who is in charge of a customer's service, communication inside and outside a club and payments

aftā	アフター	Drinking and eating outside of a club after the club has closed
kizukai	気遣い	Being thoughtful about others and giving something to them ahead of receiving requests
...chōme	…丁目	A district
genji-na/ genji-mei	源氏名	A name as a hostess or host
mizuwari	水割り	Alcohol (often whisky or cognac) with water and ice
soda-wari	ソーダ割り	Alcohol with sparkling water
rock	ロック	On the rocks
goissho sasete itadaki masu	ご一緒させていただきます	May I join you, thank you for letting me join you or thank you for sharing your drinks and bon appétit
shimoneta	下ネタ	Sexual talk or sexual banter
gochisō sama deshita	ごちそうさまでした	Thank you for the lovely drink (or meal)
senpai-kōhai	先輩・後輩	A senior and a junior
bureikō	無礼講	Loosening hierarchies and breaking tensions between employees and employers or subordinates and superiors with the help of alcohol in a drinking situation, therefore allowing all members to be equal and to talk freely and honestly to each other
gekokujō	下剋上	Overturning hierarchy
shitsurei shimasu	失礼します	Please excuse us…
iro de uru	色で売る	Selling one's sexuality and femininity, or oneself through one's sexuality and femininity
renai gokko	恋愛ごっこ	Pretending to have a romantic relationship
kyabajō	キャバ嬢	Hostesses in cabaret clubs
iro koi eigyō	色恋営業	Literally meaning 'sensuous love trade', or sales of commodified romantic relationship
neta	ネタ	A topic to talk about
desugi nai kedo hikisugi nai	出過ぎないけど引き過ぎない	Not becoming too self-assertive but not holding back too much
wakimae (noun), *wakimaeru* (verb)	わきまえ、わきまえる	Discernment, to discern
kūki o yomu	空気を読む	Reading the atmosphere, especially in hostess clubs it means understanding and conjecturing what the person at the top of the hierarchy feels and desires
busu	ブス	Not pretty
kiki nagasu	聴き流す	Letting what someone says go in one ear and out the other
tatemae–honne	建前–本音	*Tatemae* means 'a formally established principle which is not necessarily accepted or practised by the parties involved' while *honne* 'designates true feelings and desires which cannot be openly expressed because of the strength of *tatemae'* (Sugimoto 2002:28)
sasshi (noun), *sassuru* (verb)	察し、察する	Guessing what others mean and taking this into account
sontaku	忖度	Taking into account a superior's opinion and feeling
kanjin	間人	A contextual man/relational actor (Hamaguchi 1982; 1985; 1996:v)

tsukkomi	突っ込み	Replying with witty and quick comments, and literally meaning to poke.
boke	ぼけ	Saying something stupid or out-of-context, or playing dumb or uneducated, and literally meaning vagueness.
keigo	敬語	Honorific language
tamego/tameguchi	ため語/ため口	Casual language
hōgen	方言	Local accent
onna kotoba	女言葉	Women's language/speech
moriagaru (intransitive verb), *moriageru* (transitive verb)	盛り上がる/盛り上げる	A feeling, atmosphere or conversation becomes boisterous, lively or fun
fun'iki	雰囲気	The atmosphere
bosei-ai	母性愛	Affection, or motherly love
naikan	内観	Introspective
shinri shugi	心理主義	Psychologism
serapī bunka	セラピー文化	Therapeutic culture
...no gijutsu	….の技術	A technique of …
kīte morau	聴いてもらう	Getting heard by someone
minsei-iin	民生委員	A local welfare commissioner
mōshiwakenasa	申し訳なさ	Feeling sorry at the same time as appreciating something
nasakenasa	情けなさ	Feeling ashamed, being pitiful of oneself or feeling miserable
omae	お前	A casual form of 'you' connoting an inferior status
chanchanko	ちゃんちゃんこ	Padded sleeveless kimono jacket
ohanashi aite no borantia	お話相手のボランティア	Conversation volunteering
on	恩	Mercy, kindness or favour
giri	義理	An obligation to return something as a result of receiving '*on*'
izakaya	居酒屋	A Japanese gastro pub or snack-bar
taitō (noun)*, taitōni* (adjective)	対等、対等に	Equality, Equal
akachōchin	赤ちょうちん	Another way of saying *izakaya*
yori kakaru	寄り掛かる	Leaning on others or depending on others' power
renga	連歌	A poem composed of lines linked and written by two or more persons
amae (noun)*, amaeru* (verb)	甘え、甘える	A fundamental desire 'to depend on and presume upon another's love' or to rely on someone through being favoured (Doi 2007:4)
dōitsuka	同一化	Identification
sesshu	摂取	Assimilation
amayakasu	甘やかす	Indulge someone
kizukai (noun), *kizukau* (verb)	気遣い	Understanding a current situation, being thoughtful, and predicting a need and offering to satisfy it ahead of receiving a request
moteru	モテる	Being popular, especially romantically attracting others
jō ni atsui hito	情に厚い人	A compassionate person

omonbakaru	慮る	Being thoughtful. Becoming attentive in order to recognise *kizukai* offered by apprentices in *rakugo* (Inagi 2015: 8–9)
kobiru	媚びる	Flatter
burikko	ぶりっこ	Act cute
nyan nyan suru	にゃんにゃんする	Act cute, an onomatopoeic word relating to a cat mewing
nigate	苦手	Not getting along with and hesitating to communicate with someone (in a case of communication)
kaiwa ga hazumu	会話が弾む	A conversation does *moriagaru*, a conversation becomes lively
yasashii hitotachi	優しい人たち	Kind people
nagara	ながら	While doing…
furumai-kata	振舞い方	Ways of interaction
waza	技	Art
kakawari-kata	関わり方	Ways of engaging with others

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Why study listening?

When I was a high school student I met Sugimoto Mitsuru, a seventy-year-old man who devoted himself to collecting cedar seeds by climbing forty-metre-high trees using only a long rope. I listened to his life story for more than thirty hours, over several days. He told me about his childhood, how he became involved in forestry, how he learnt to climb trees, how he predicted which seeds would grow into great trees, how he married, what he felt when he lost colleagues as a result of accidents in the forest, and how he could picture the forest in 100 years' time in his mind. I transcribed the interview and edited it as a monologue. Through the whole process, I repeatedly listened to his story. I learnt how listening can open up new worlds.

After completing his life story, I received a letter from Sugimoto. He wrote: 'Through being listened to and being interviewed, I was able to find the meaning and joy in life again. I hope you also had meaningful experiences too. Thank you.' This amazed me. I have come to understand that listening can empower people and allow us to build trust with each other. Listening is not simply a way to understand words: listening is the core of an interaction; listening is powerful. Ever since this experience, I have been interested in listening.

While continuing to write people's life stories (cf. Hitonomori project 2004; Tokyo Foundation and NPO Kyōzon no mori network 2012), I carried out research into listeners. My master's thesis project in Japan sought to understand the meaning of the relationships created by occupational listeners, such as listening volunteers, people operating telephone/hotline, writers of life stories and providers of paid listening services (2011). I interviewed these listeners and I suggested that their work creates a psychological safety-net in Japan. I also conducted a project in Glasgow, as part of my master's thesis, focusing on the role and power of listening for Muslims (2014). I explored the fact that some Muslims believe that Allah is listening to them: they have a conversation with Allah, who is a good listener and knows everything. This gives them psychological security and it also regulates their behaviour. Unlike most people in Japan, they have the ultimate ideal listener.

I started to wonder again what listening is. What is a good listener in Japan? What makes a person an ideal listener? How can I be a good listener? Equipped with this curiosity, I rediscovered the fact that there are many 'good' listeners around me, such as shop staff, teachers, bartenders,

hairdressers, nurses, my mother, my friends and even my dog. Why do I think they are good listeners? What are the common features and what are the differences between them? So I embarked on my PhD research into listening.

People in Japan unconsciously gain listening skills. Children train themselves to patiently listen to their parents and teachers. As family members or friends, people listen to those they care about. Many occupations, such as bartenders, waiters/waitresses, supermarket clerks, fortune-tellers, members of staff at nail or hair salons, teachers, students, doctors, nurses, lawyers and young apprentices in private companies acquire the appropriate listening behaviour in order to fit in a particular situation and to carry out their work.

It is argued that people in Japan rely on listeners rather than speakers to ensure good conversation takes place. For example, linguist John Hinds (1987:141) argues that listeners and readers using the Japanese language have more responsibility for ensuring the given information is successfully communicated than speakers and writers, while in English writers and speakers are more responsible than readers and listeners. Similarly, anthropologist Edward Hall (1976:111–113) introduces the idea that in a high-context culture, such as Japan, listeners are responsible for understanding the language that is spoken and have to sense what is expected, instead of speakers giving clear and coherent utterances, such as a low-context culture requires. Even though the concept of high/low context has been criticised as an extreme generalisation and methodological flaw of Hall's research, this concept is recognised as a heuristic finding in the field of business. Furthermore, linguist Haru Yamada (1997:50) discusses that the Japanese identify an ideal communicator as a listener who cares about other communicators or about group dynamics, rather than a speaker who asserts their opinions and independence, like people in the US. Overall, the 'listener-is-responsible' tendency is found when it comes to comparing the structure of the language and the form of communication in Japan with that in other places.

However, this generalisation is risky. Speaking eloquently is definitely one of the important elements required to succeed in social life in Japan, supported by the fact that there are a greater number of manuals on speaking compared to those on listening. Therefore, in reality, people in Japan probably prioritise becoming a competent speaker, whilst also, to some degree, recognising the importance of listening.

If people want to become a competent speaker, who is responsible for becoming a listener in contemporary Japan? Who is a good listener? How does such a listener behave in different places? What does it mean to become a good listener?

Some people have started to pay attention to listening. Many manuals pertaining to listening have been published since around 2010, including the best-selling essay *Kiku chikara* (*The Power/Possibility of Listening*), written by Agawa Sawako (2012). Listening training courses have also been held in multiple places. A lot of people become listening volunteers to support elderly people and those who are mentally distressed. A number of telephone listening services exist, including both commercial and non-commercial. Each listening movement has a different aim but they are usually seeking to support individuals and to create good interpersonal relationships by listening.

In psychology, a good listener (or counsellor) is defined by clinical psychologist Carl Ransom Rogers (1980:115–116) as a counsellor who acquires unconditional positive regard, empathetic understanding and congruence. Unconditional positive regard means listening to a speaker non-judgementally; empathetic understanding means to understand that what is said is true for a speaker, and feeling what the speaker feels while putting the listener's own feelings and opinions aside; while congruence means maintaining the consistency in a listener's self. To what extent are these criteria applicable outside of a counselling room? How do different occupational and non-occupational listeners listen to others?

It is hard to answer these questions because listening has rarely been researched from these social perspectives. Anthropologists focus on sound and sensory perceptions (Bull and Back 2006) but not on listening and listeners. In communication studies, for example, Ralph Nichols (1948, 1962, 1987), who is called 'the father of the field of listening' and the founder of the International Listening Association (ILA), addresses listening comprehension in both the education and the corporate arena using both qualitative and quantitative methods. He reveals which elements are required to become a competent listener, such as intelligence, reading comprehension or the size of the listener's vocabulary. Similarly, educational psychologist Margarete Imhof (1998) conducted a questionnaire and qualitative survey to identify the aspects of a good listener among university students. Like Ralph, she links a good listener with listening comprehension, including efficiency and accuracy. However, neither Nichols nor Imhof consider listening as a part of interaction in specific social contexts. In the light of an investigation of the cultural factors, such

as values, language and cognitive processing, communication researcher Dean Thomlison (1997:82–83) attributes successful listening to motivation and understanding both about listening and different cultures, but misses how external causes, such as aims of interactions or one's social role, affect listening. Communication researchers Andrew Wolvin and Carolyn Coakley (1996) categorise listening into five types and repeat the significance of having a desire to listen and the possession of certain characteristics, such as an interest in people and an other-oriented disposition, in order to become active listeners. They overlook listeners' performative aspect. Overall, the researchers focus on individuals' motives and characteristics, but they do not consider unwritten rules for communicators in certain contexts or listeners' impressions or emotional management. Therefore, their research does not fully answer the question: what is a good listener in a certain society?

Scholars applying the ethnography of communication have broken new ground to observe communication through micro perspectives and to incorporate cultural and social aspects such as religion, ethnicity, status, roles or gender into their analysis of conversations (Hymes 1962; Hymes and Gumperz 1972; Saville-Troike 2003). They, however, tend to analyse interactions by focusing on acts of speaking and speakers, while this study attempts to carry out the ethnography of listening and listeners.

Researchers using conversation analysis have begun focusing on a discourse-centred approach (Moerman 1988). Thus, scholars have proposed an understanding that conversations are constructed by collaborations between speakers and listeners, and therefore have observed how listeners/recipients/adressee behave and interact (Goodwin 1981, 1984, 2009; Jefferson 1978; Lerner 1992; Mandelbaum 1987; Nishikawa 2005; Nishizaka 2009; Sacks 1974; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974; Stivers 2008). However, these studies focus on the orderliness of conversations and mechanisms of collaboration, and do not include dynamics of interpersonal relationships or individuals' backgrounds, roles and purposes of interactions.

Moreover, academics studying conversation analysis and linguistics have developed research on listeners' gestures, gaze and minimal responses. For example, in the English context, researcher of communication and semiotician Charles Goodwin (1981, 1984, 2009) focuses on hearers' gaze and bodily behaviour in micro-interaction, and delineates how speakers change their utterance through observing listeners' displays. In the Japanese context, many researchers focus on listeners' *aizuchi* (minimal response or interjection) (Horiguchi 1988; Imaishi 1993; Kita and Ide 2007;

Mizutani 1988; Szatrowski 2000). However, although these researchers are concerned with listeners as those who possess a range of conversational competences and proactive cognitive abilities, their research is limited to acts, gestures and short utterances, and does not deal with listeners' longer articulations, performative facets or individual backgrounds, nor motivations and roles in interactions.

Some scholars do not limit the roles of listeners to *aizuchi* or non-verbal behaviours, but include longer articulations. For example, sociolinguist Kushida Shūya (2009) analyses three ways in which listeners contribute to the developments of conversations: first, listeners show reactions to sustain conversations such as *unazuki* (head nodding) or *aizuchi*: second, listeners reply to a speaker to prompt the conversation with phrases like 'And then?' or the other question forms: and third, listeners articulate something on behalf of speakers who pause in order to promote the continuation of the conversation. Sociolinguist Ueno Kishiko (2011) also analyses how different types of social relationships influence listeners' reactions and articulations in Japanese conversations. She found eight types of responses that listeners could have: *aizuchi*; asking questions; confirming what a speaker said; informing additional knowledge; commenting with what a listener felt; articulating something in advance before a speaker says it; answering a question; and, finally, agreeing. She finds that when teachers are listeners in one-to-one conversations with students, the teachers tend to ask questions or to anticipate the flow of the talk and articulate words before the students. When students are listeners, they are prone to *aizuchi* and showing their agreement to the teachers' comments. When students as listeners have conversations with friends, they tend to construct their conversation collaboratively by having a similar amount of self-disclosure and question asking. Therefore, these researchers analyse listeners as proactive and cooperative communicators who also speak. This is the type of listener I will analyse in this study (see more details of the definition of a listener in Chapter 1.2 and Chapter 3.2.1). Ueno's research takes both the *verbal aspects* of the role of listeners, and interlocutors' *hierarchical relationships* into account using conversation analysis. Similarly, I aim to include both elements, but use ethnography and interview as my methods to understand listening and listeners in a specific community.

In gender research, either using observation or quantitative methods, sociolinguists have analysed gender differences in communication, such as the use of gender-related language, amount of talk, turn-taking, turn-length, interruptions, overlapping behaviour, questioning, topic initiation,

and conversations with different occupational status (Eakins and Eakins 1978; Edelsky 1981; Fishman 1977; Lakoff 1973, 1975; Leet-Pellegrini 1980; Woods 1988; Zimmerman and West 1975). Although some of this research has been criticised in terms of methodology or misinterpretations of conversational functions[i], they have identified that women tend to become supportive communicators while men are prone to dominating a conversation by speaking. Therefore, these research results have indicated a tendency for women to be responsible for listening. From other angles, some researchers have attributed the male dominance in interactions to differences of conversational style between men and women. For instance, children are taught different ways to communicate: girls for supporting others and boys for asserting dominance (Maltz and Borker 1982). Linguist Deborah Tannen (1990:38–42) suggests that women's communication style is characterised by connection and intimacy, while men's is defined by status and independence. Linguist Jennifer Coates (1996:265–268) argues that women's style consists of collective values and solidarity, while men's style is identified by individualistic values and separateness. Ethicist and political philosopher Jean Bethke Elshtain (1982:51–56) traces the roots of this dichotomy to Greek antiquity, explaining that men exclusively inhabited a public sphere while women inhabited the private space. Although these researchers neither focus on listening nor clearly say that women had to become listeners, these findings give insights into understanding women's other-oriented communication, which reproduces their position as listeners, and can help in analysing my findings in this research.

Although some scholars have started deciphering mechanisms of listening and listeners' roles, my research questions have not yet been answered. This means that the current situation of research still neglects an opportunity to arrive at a better understanding of human interaction.

1.2 The definition and premises of listening

The meanings of listening in English and Japanese do not completely overlap. Most English dictionaries distinguish between listening and hearing. For example, the *Oxford Dictionary of*

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[i] Some of this research has been criticised in relation to factors such as validity of informal observation, misinterpretation of the role of tag questions (Coates 1996:191–201), misinterpretation of interruption (Arhens 1997; Itakura 2001), miscounting some conversational features as dominating by quantitative methods (Itakura 2001; Talbot 1992), the need to take account of the contexts of actual use rather than isolated variables (Thorne *et al.* 1983:14), and suggestion of significance of expertise and occupations rather than gender difference (Beattie 1981; Leet-Pellegrini 1980).

English (3rd edition 2010) differentiates between an initial meaning of listening as 'give one's attention to a sound' and hearing as 'perceive with the ear the sound made by (someone or something)'. Thus, listening is defined as an active action and hearing is considered to be passive. Listening according to English dictionaries indicates a clear dichotomy between listening and hearing.

In comparison, Japanese dictionaries, such as *Kojien* (2008) and *Digital Daijisen*, include hearing, listening, questioning, accepting, allowing, and distinguishing smell or taste among the definitions for the word *kiku* (きく) in hiragana, and 聞く in Chinese characters (*kanji*). The typical 聞く implies both listening with an intention and perceiving a sound or voice, while an alternative *kanji* for *kiku*, 聴く, specifically refers to an internal attempt to understand the meaning of the sound through listening. Notably, *kiku* (聴く) consists of the *kanji* radical of the ears, the eyes and the heart. *Nihon-daihyakka zensho* distinguishes that to 'be audible (きこえる)' involves a passive action, but 'listening (きく)' is an active selective reaction (*Shōgakkan* online). Moreover, *kiku* (訊く) means especially asking, and *kiku* (利く) means distinguishing smell or taste (*Ruigo Shin Jiten* 2011).

The striking aspect to emerge from the definitions is that asking a question can be construed as an aspect of listening. This aspect always appears in listening manuals in Japan too. Therefore the utterance of words is not invariably an act of the speaker, which signifies an ambiguous border between listeners and speakers in situations where someone is asking or responding. Some academics have already pointed out this aspect and suggest that listeners talk. For example, based on Kushida's research (2009, see in Chapter 1.1), sociolinguist Den Yasuharu (2009) proposes two types of listeners' responses: first, listeners' responses as hearers (my translation of *kikite ni yoru kikite-teki kōdō*) which includes reactions to sustain the conversation such as *aizuchi*; and second, listeners' responses as speakers (*kikite ni yoru hanashite-teki kōdō*) which consists of replies to a speaker to prompt the conversation such as 'And then?', and of articulations to promote continuation such as speaking a short sentence on behalf of a speaker who stops talking. Linguist Yamada Haru (2015) also suggests the term 'listener talk' by looking at an ability to predict the flow of conversation and to confirm it – for example, saying 'You are saying that...' as a listener. Similarly, authors of listening manuals deal with responding as a role of the listener, although Japanese dictionaries do not clearly indicate 'responding' as listening. So listeners talk.

Among English dictionaries, only the *Oxford Dictionary of English* defines the second meaning of listening as to 'take notice of and act on what someone says; respond to advice or a request', while others, like Collins or Merriam-Webster, do not include both responding and asking in the meaning of listening.

Despite the fact that most English dictionaries ignore responding or asking as a part of listening, many researchers in communication studies in English contexts consider that listening consists of an active responding process. Michael Purdy (1991:11) defines listening as 'the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal) needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings'. Similarly, the International Listening Association (1996) defines listening as 'the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages'. So listeners are responsible for responding.

Therefore, in this thesis, I use the word 'listening' to mean receiving what is said, understanding it, considering it, responding to it by short utterances, long articulations (such as asking questions, commenting or confirming), and/or non-verbal behaviour (see more details about who would be considered a speaker or listener, in Chapter 3). I do not investigate interview techniques or ways of asking questions for journalism or in interrogations.

In addition, I would like to suggest two premises in relation to researching listening: two types of languages and social order or situational propriety. According to sociologist Erving Goffman (1963:13–14), actors (speakers or 'transmitters') provide two types of information, namely 'linguistic messages' and 'expressive messages'. Goffman explains that linguistic messages 'can be "about" anything in the world, the sender and the subject matter having no necessary connection', except when the given message is about the speaker's self. On the other hand, expressive messages are 'necessarily "about" the same causal physical complex of which the transmitting agency is an intrinsic part' and 'often preserve the fiction that they are uncalculated, spontaneous, and involuntary, as in some cases they are.' Most messages consist of both linguistic and expressive/bodily messages and audiences use the latter 'involuntary' expressive messages to verify the speakers' linguistic intentional aspects (Goffman 1990:18). Given that actors or speakers impart information in both linguistic and expressive (bodily) forms, the understanding and analysis of listeners should take into account both these aspects. This is the first premise.

Using two types of languages, how do speakers decide on the means of expression? To explain this, Goffman (1963:8) introduces the important concept of 'social order', which is the basic rule of behaviour for all people in all situations and is the second premise in this research. He defines social order 'as the consequence of any set of moral norms that regulates the way in which persons pursue objectives. The set of norms does not specify the objectives the participants are to seek, nor the pattern formed by and through the coordination or integration of these ends, but merely the modes of seeking them' (1966:8). In other words, social order means 'situational proprieties' (1963:243), 'the rule obliging participants to "fit in"' (1966:11) or tacit rules to behave. Goffman explains that this concept ensures that actors do not attract undue attention to themselves, while also not avoiding attention either, and act without disturbing harmony. Thus, social order governs the type and degree of an individual's involvement in a certain situation 'through a conventionalised idiom of the behavioural cues' (Goffman 1963:243). Socio linguists also mention a similar notion that communicators usually acknowledge their social situation and determine the way of behaving by understanding the nature of the setting (Blom and Gumpers 1972:423). Although people may not be aware that they are obeying these rules, they are subconsciously guided by them. Listeners must also behave based on situational proprieties.

Thus far, in this research, I define listening as receiving what is said, understanding it, considering it, replying including asking questions, commenting or confirming. The last three aspects indicate that a listener talks. Moreover, the first premise is that a listener uses both linguistic and expressive/bodily messages. The second premise is that a listener senses situational proprieties and follows them in order to fit into a situation. Based on these two premises, I would like to pose several additional questions: how does a listener manipulate both linguistic and expressive/bodily messages? If a listener is also governed by 'social order/situational proprieties', what are the tacit rules for a listener? How do these tacit consents differ in situations where the dynamics of gender, hierarchy and money are present? By seeking to answer these questions, this study will investigate the ways that a listener communicates and the rules which govern a listener's dealings with others.

1.3 Methods and ethics

I have mainly employed an anthropological approach, which has not previously been sufficiently incorporated in research on listening. I carried out both covert and overt participant observation (Spradley 1980; Bryman 2008) and produced 'thick descriptions' (Geertz 1973). Furthermore, I carried out formal and informal interviews with occupational listeners, analysed manuals of listening and observed conversations in TV dramas.

In my covert participant observation, I observed and eavesdropped on listeners in four contexts: in a university, in restaurants, in cafes and in pubs (*izakaya)*. Over two days, I attended nine lectures and seminars, which varied in content, size and number of students, at Keio University, on the Shōnan Fujisawa Campus. I also observed people in random restaurants, cafes and pubs, mainly in Tokyo.

I carried out overt participant observation in hostess clubs (night clubs where female escorts work) in Tokyo because hostesses are known to be good listeners, and people (including hostesses themselves) have published manuals on hostesses' communication (Hidaka 2013; Mizuki 2015; Mochizuki 2009; Mukaidni, 2005; Nanba 2009). I worked as a hostess in Ginza, Tokyo, averaging three nights per week from January to April 2018, in order to examine hostesses' conversation techniques. I also worked in a Korean hostess club in Kawasaki for a day to compare hostesses' communication (May 2019). I also had chances to visit three other hostess clubs in Ginza as a guest. As I am a female anthropologist, working as a hostess for research offered me a great opportunity and one which not everyone could have accessed.

I also participated in several *keichō* (active listening, hereafter called AL) volunteering groups in Tokyo, Nagano and Kōbe from January to April 2018, because they offer non-commercial listening. Another reason I chose AL volunteering is that the number of AL volunteers is increasing each year, but only a little research has been conducted into this. The other reason that I selected AL volunteers, rather than people in other workplaces, is that I have already had connections with them due to the previous research I carried out during my master's degree. I also attended several workshops, lectures, symposiums and talks about AL.

When working as a hostess and joining AL volunteers I was open about my position as a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge. I explained this when I had an interview with a hostess club when I was seeking to be hired. The club 'Mama' and other hostesses always explained my research to customers. AL volunteers also mentioned my position to their clients when I joined

their conversations. I did not ask my participants to sign any consent forms because it would bring unnecessary anxiety or stress for the hostesses, their customers, the volunteers and their clients. All names of individuals, clubs and volunteering groups are pseudonyms.

I collected enough data from the four months of fieldwork both in a hostess club and AL volunteering groups, in addition to four short-term periods of fieldwork. I could have collected richer data if I had continued to work as a hostess and volunteer longer; however, this would have increased various types of risks for me. Firstly, I would have to tolerate sexual and mental harassment longer in a hostess club, which includes serious risks, such as the risk of being raped or stalked. Even during just four months I encountered cases of harassment and dealt with serious abusive situations. I realised that the harder I worked and the deeper I immersed myself in the hostess culture, the more I was unintentionally accepting harassment. This physical and psychological immersion, as well as the pressure and expectation to be a competent hostess imposed on me by members of staff of the club, also brought about difficulties in regard to maintaining my position as a researcher. Sometimes I forgot that I was researching. This was the second risk. Furthermore, I had to drink a lot of alcohol, therefore the health risk would have increased with a longer period of fieldwork. Moreover, it was financially difficult to undertake this fieldwork. Although I received funding from several institutions, I had to compensate for a lack of money from my earnings as a hostess. For these reasons, I finished my fieldwork after four months.

Moreover, I carried out formal and informal interviews with many other occupational listeners: formal and semi-structured interviews with a bartender, a fortune-teller, a teacher, a priest, a café owner, a clinical psychologist, a career consultant, a business investor, an AL coach, hostesses, AL volunteers and telephone hotline volunteers; informal interviews with an eyelash artist, a coaching trainer, a customer engineer, hostesses, AL volunteers, hosts, bartenders, fortune-tellers, hairdressers, nail artists and some customers of these occupational listeners. I also attended several lectures and symposiums related to occupational listeners, including a terminal care surgeon, a claim management staff member at a department store and interviewers in oral history projects. They gave me several hints with scrutinising the difference between occupational listeners and listeners in cafés or pubs.

In the scrutiny of manuals pertaining to listening, I selected 23 books published between 2000 to 2019, written by different types of authors. I also investigated 5 manuals on speaking, to compare them to the former.

Additionally, I observed conversations in TV dramas. I then produced ethnographic notes and analysed these using domain and taxonomic analysis (Spradley 1980).

I heavily rely on observations and ethnographic data in this research because what people think and say and what people actually do sometimes differ. In particular, people often listen to others in unconscious ways. Therefore, although I carried out a lot of interviews, I needed to incorporate the ethnographic method into my research. However, this does not mean I solely relied on my eyes and did not use my ears. Listening is not only my research theme but also a crucial method of gaining data. As anthropologist Martin Forsey (2010) critically proposes 'engaged listening and participant listening', I tried to listen to my research participants not only in relation to themes but also their life stories and sometimes eavesdropped on my participants' talks. As sociologist Res Back (2007:8) insists on the importance of 'democracy of senses' for social investigations, listening and other senses are fully incorporated in my ethnography.

1.4 Thesis structure

My thesis is organised as follows. In Chapter 2, I analyse manuals and training courses on listening. Authors and listening coaches teach that the ideal listener is one who is attentive, expressive and empathetic in non-specific contexts. This person attentively listens, produces bodily and verbal expressions, and accepts what is said as a fact for a speaker. She/he does not criticise or argue with the speaker. However, in detailed examples, such as in a senior-junior worker relationship or a parent-child relationship, the ideal listener seems to use two different types of listening: therapeutic and zealous. Therapeutic listening is recommended for people in positions of power and has characteristics of being caring and of supporting a speaker's issue, while concealing authoritative power. This functions as 'a mask of silent authority'. The other type of listening, which I name 'zealous listening' is recommended for subordinates and is characterised by actively asking questions, strategically articulating, making entertaining replies and performing as an aspiring learner. This listening works as 'an interactional weapon of the weak'. These two forms of listening indicate the importance of acknowledging and handling the hierarchy as a listener.

Moreover, the analysis of manuals reveals conflicting images of listening. On the one hand, the authors admit that listening (used to) connote femininity and inferiority. On the other hand,

they attempt to create a new image of listening as a powerful, functional and even masculine behaviour. Interestingly, although the authors make an effort to change the conventional image of listening, they still compliment women as being good listeners. Does this mean that women gain power by employing their listening skills these days? Probably not. My research reveals that listening can bring a temporary power, however, this power does not work to overturn a hierarchy; rather, listeners tend to reproduce their original positions by deploying listening skills.

The following chapters, 3 and 4, deal with occupational listeners in different kinds of environments and with different purposes of listening: hostesses in a night club and AL volunteers. The former engage in listening in order to earn money in a place where mostly male clients buy drinks and a clear hierarchy exists, while the latter offer altruistic listening to elderly people. Their environments and purposes are completely different; however, they both have to handle power relationships.

In Chapter 3, I describe hostesses' conversational techniques as listeners and argue that there is a gendered division of labour in interactions (Fishman 1980; Zimmerman and West 1975). At night clubs in Ginza, Tokyo, hostesses are involved in listening as a streetsmart skill in a competitive hostess business and as a means of entertainment. They manage their self-assertiveness, read the atmosphere, deploy funny or witty replies, display exaggerated reactions, keep up conversations and manipulate different types of language as skilful listeners. This enables them to stay in subordinate and supportive positions and ensure male customers dominate the conversation as speakers, which reflect the division of labour in interaction. For hostesses, listening is an interactional weapon of the weak, gaining customers' favour, business connections and money.

One type of successful interaction is known as a '*moriagaru*/*moriagatteiru*' (lively and fun) conversation. From the hostesses' perspective, listening is a way to contribute to a *moriagaru* conversation. However, male customers also sometimes say that they are themselves responsible for *moriagaru* conversations by speaking, and they criticise hostesses for just listening. Both sides' endeavour creates a *moriagaru* conversation while intensifying the gendered division of labour in interactions.

In Chapter 4, I scrutinise AL volunteers' listening and how they balance power in their interactions. AL volunteers converse with elderly people and use listening as a tool for reaching out, contributing to ensuring such people live in a healthy and less lonely way. However, they

sometimes fall short in conversation, not realising that their listening tends to force interlocutors to stay in the helpee/subordinate position. Their dedicated listening is a 'gift' (Mauss 2002), which bestows an authoritative power on the helper and obligates the receiver to reciprocate. Therefore, when a volunteer clings to the role of the listener and refuses a client's reciprocal behaviour, a tension occurs. Thus, some volunteers and clients negotiate their power balance by means of subtle behaviour and attitudes, and create comfortable relationships between them, even though they remain in an asymmetric listener–speaker relationship. Managing power relations and reciprocity is the key to succeeding. Furthermore, a cosy and crowded space – and an appropriate degree of conversational intervention by someone who can read the atmosphere – are significant factors that can create a comfortable group AL conversation.

In Chapter 5, I analyse listeners' emotional labour and describe how this influences their ways of listening in the case of hostesses and AL volunteers. Firstly, I introduce two types of fundamental emotional labour: *yorisou* for AL volunteers and *kizukau* for hostesses. *Yorisou* means standing by someone physically and psychologically, including behaviour like reading others' feelings, putting oneself in others' shoes and controlling emotional attachment and detachment. Based on *yorisou,* AL volunteers offer therapeutic listening, deep-acting listening (a listener listens to someone by showing situationally expected attitudes and creating socially required emotions in the mind by dismissing other emotions which do not align with the outward expressions) or surface-acting listening (a listener listens to someone by displaying socially-expected attitudes without changing their own emotions which do not coordinate with surface-acting). *Kizukau* consists of a kind of mind-reading, being tirelessly thoughtful about others, predicting needs and providing for those needs ahead of receiving requests. Hostesses' *kizukai* generates zealous listening and affects the types of question, points that can be praised or things to avoid commenting on. In both cases, they enhance their self-concept as competent volunteers or hostesses due to autonomy in their emotional labour. Moreover, they win clients'/customers' favour and trust and strengthen their intimacy over time, which can become beneficial for themselves.

Emotional labour becomes harder when customers or clients are abusive or unkind. Hostesses suppress aversion and generate submission in their minds while still evoking cheerful feelings. Some hostesses, therefore, become quiet listeners while other experienced hostesses perform skilful listening, such as surface-acting listening, deep-acting listening or listening obliquely

(while exhibiting situationally required expressions and attitudes, a listener keeps both one's own true emotions that differ from the surface expressions as well as emotions that are altered to align with the surface acting). Similarly, AL volunteers repress perturbation and generate compassion and respect by reconstructing an understanding of their clients. In both cases, they attempt to avoid deteriorating the intimacy with their customers/clients. So, the ideal listener has to excel at emotional labour, which makes them likeable.

In Chapter 6, I introduce my concept of *nagara* listening. Listeners are always involved in other actions/acts while listening, and often use material help (I name auxiliary artefacts) to manage their hands or eyes. This is a tacit rule that all listeners subconsciously acquire. I discuss the limitation of Goffman's theory (1963) in that it describes only involvements in a hierarchical order, while my observation disclosed the presence of non-hierarchical actions/acts. Hall's theory of polychronic culture (1983) includes non-hierarchical multitasking culture, but not hierarchical behaviour and voluntary and involuntary acts or gestures. The concept of *nagara* listening overcomes these limitations. I argue that one purpose of being involved in *nagara* listening is to make conversations smooth. Listeners manage self-investment into interactions by *nagara* activities and as a result, they can create a comfortable psychological distance. I also discuss elements which either expand or limit the degree and types of *nagara* listening, such as the purposes of situations, the physical environment and individuals' social statuses.

In conclusion, I state that the cores of the Japanese art of listening are the sensitivity towards the hierarchy and heavy investment of energy to emotional labour. I also re-describe various types of listening that competent listeners use and three main latent rules that listeners follow: dealing with power relations, managing distance (intimacy and formality) and controlling bodies and emotions. These three aspects disclose the meaning of listening: listening is not simply a tool or skill that is used to hear articulations, to understand someone or to exchange words, but also a way to associate with others (*kakawari-kata*). Therefore, in order to be a good listener, one needs to acquire both fundamental skills and one's own unique and long-term experiences to engage with others.

I inserted the background information of main research participants in appendix 1, as well as a list of observed cases with information on gender and age in appendix 2.

Chapter 2. What makes a good listener?

   Authors of manuals and coaches of training courses on listening teach the 'dos and don'ts' of normative and ideal listening. What do they say about the qualities of a good listener and how to become one? Moreover, authors of manuals praise women as good listeners while promoting a powerful, functional and proactive image of listening and denying a feminine and inferior image of listening. What is the logic behind changing the image of a good listener? In this chapter, I analyse these questions in order to reveal norms regarding a good listener.

2.1 Manuals and training courses teach ideals

   Upon entering any large bookshop in Japan you will find a corner in which are displayed manuals with catchy phrases or pictures of smiley, successful people on the colourful front cover. Such books are known as 'manner books' (*manā bukku*), 'how-to books' (*hautsū bon*), 'self-enlightenment books' (*jiko keihatsu sho*) or 'business books' (*bijinesu sho*). They are usually small paperbacks of 150 to 250 pages and explain how to solve a problem or to improve one's skills in any area from 'the magic of cleaning' to improving one's love life and business success. They are written in a simple form, with illustrations and catchy titles, and they avoid using technical terms or scholarly references. This literature attracts a huge number of readers in contemporary Japan. Sales have remained stable, with many such books appearing in the monthly top 20 bestseller lists,

Figure 1: A corner of a bookshop in Tokyo selling manuals

even though general book sales have been declining since 1996 (Zenkoku shuppan kyōkai shuppan kagaku kenkyūjo 2015). This indicates the popularity of manuals.

Manuals likely developed out of 'conduct literature', which has circulated since the Heian period (794–1185), which offered advice on various matters, such as suitable behaviour and appearance (Bardsley and Miller 2011:3–4; Ikegami 2005; Sasaki 2012). This literature conceivably aimed at assisting readers both to fit into their social groups and to accomplish their social role. From the Meiji period (1868 to 1912), this kind of literature started not only to provide instruction on social norms but also to propose the concept of self-help and individual success, due to social changes. These social changes, which were implemented by the Japanese government, consisted of abolishing the strict hierarchies of the traditional class system and establishing a compulsory education system in order both to create a national identity, rather than regional identities, and to counteract any interference from outside powers. These social changes eventually led to increased reliance on individual motivation, education and abilities (Kinmonth 1981:9–43; Sasaki 2012). Within this context, two pioneering examples of self-help literature appeared. One was the Japanese translation of Samuel Smiles's famous book *Self-Help*, '*Saikoku risshi hen*' (1871), the other Fukuzawa Yukichi's bestseller *Gakumon no susume* (*An Encouragement of Learning* 1872) (Kinmoth 1981: 9–43; Makino 2012: 39). Although these two books mentioned mutual cooperation, they also started a focus on self-development.

From the Meiji to the *Shōwa* period, monthly or weekly magazines, such as *Jitsugyō no Nihon* (*Japanese business*) (Dainihon jitsugyō gakkai 1897 to 2002) and *Seikō* (*Success*) (Seikō zasshi-sha 1912 to 1915), offered success stories and business information based on self-help notions (Mikami 2012; Takeuchi 1976). These were therefore self-help or business guides rather than conduct literature. On the other hand, conduct literature continued to be read, especially vis-à-vis behaviour in public places, such as how to greet or how to give a name card. *Nichijō reihō no kokoroe* (*Rules of everyday manners*) (Tokugawa 1941) was a famous example (Kumakura 1999:222–232; Sasaki 2012).

The orientation of self-development persists among contemporary manuals. For example, 'power/competency/ability of ...' ('*...-no chikara'* or '*...-ryoku'*, which is the Sino-Japanese reading of the same character as *chikara*) is one of the phrases popularly used in these books. It represents a variety of abilities that allow individuals to survive in the competitive and individualistic contemporary Japanese society (Honda 2005:22–25). Sociologist Makino

Tomokazu (2012:19) argues that the self-help media indicate the current situation – influenced by neo-liberal values – where individuals have to rely on their own abilities to build their social status and identity. Echoing this social background, manuals now have a tendency to provide self-help tips, rather than to teach cooperation with others, or simply manners. This tendency can also be found in manuals on listening and communication as authors often use the phrase 'the power of listening'. Therefore, I consider contemporary manuals on listening to be part of 'self-help literature'.

Whilst there were only about five self-help books on listening in 2005, according to an AL facilitator whom I interviewed in 2009, the number of guides is increasing. In 2012, '*Kiku chikara*: *kokoro o hiraku 35 no hinto'* (The *Power/Possibility of listening: 35 hints to open up one's heart*), written by Agawa Sawako (2012), was among the best-selling books of the year. It applies an essay style and introduces 35 techniques to become a good listener, such as giving minimal responses or preparing three main questions, based on Agawa's own interview experiences. The success of this book boosted the number of self-help guides on listening. Furthermore, since 2016, I found a new trend to use the phrase 'the power of asking questions' in the titles of 13 self-help guides.

Although the number of publications on listening is increasing, most self-help books on communication still focus on speaking. When I visited three bookstores in Tokyo I found three to five times more books on speaking than books on listening. However, even in self-help books on speaking, authors often recommend becoming a good listener and introduce listening skills, such

Figure 2: Manuals in the category of communication, including both speaking and listening (in a bookstore in Tokyo)

Figure 3: Two pictures taken in the same bookstore in Tokyo. The upper one shows manuals on speaking while the lower picture display manuals on listening. Manuals on speaking are three to five times more common than publications on listening. (May 2019)

as head nodding or not talking for too long (Ōhshima 2019; Saito 2010; Yasuda 2015; Yoshida 2019). Even authors on speaking now cannot ignore an element of listening in terms of communication.

This literature is one of the primary sources for investigating current standards and ideals of listening behaviour. Examining etiquette manuals from 1350 to the eighteenth century in Western countries, sociologist Norbert Elias (Elias *et al.* 2000:27) asserts that these instructions on manners provide standards of habits, social rules and taboos at a given time. Goffman (1963:5–6) similarly points out that etiquette books seem to describe a part of social norms which affect the behaviour of people in the middle class. Analysing popular advice books for women, sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild (1990:278–279) suggests that these guides govern not only the actor's outer appearance but inner feelings and the self. As these academics argue, self-help guides in

contemporary Japan also instruct readers on social norms, and even express ideals that formulate future standards. Therefore, although readers' levels of engagement with the instructions provided by self-help literature are hard to ascertain (Hirakawa 2011:137), self-help literature will be the useful primary source to understand contemporary norms of listening. (Standards and ideals will be compared to ethnographic research in Chapters 3 and 4.)

To analyse the norms and ideals of listening, I selected 23 titles published between 2000 and 2019. They represent a diversity in publication year, popularity, authors' gender and authors' occupation. Four books out of 23 are written by women. Eight guides are written by counsellors (including one female) and eight are published by other types of communication professionals, e.g. a *seishin taiwa-shi* (mental interlocutor), a researcher on human behaviour in sociology, a professor of education, a communication-improvement consultant, a psychological consultant, a speaking trainer and a representative of a telephone-listening-service company and two coaching trainers (one female). Three guides are by business-related people and four books are by those in other occupations including a surgeon (female), a newscaster/interviewer (female), an editor and a writing coach.

Such books target mainly two types of readers. First, those who want to become AL (*keichō*) volunteers, as well as general readers who wish to improve their interpersonal relationships by AL. AL is one of the basic counselling styles. As a result, listeners gain trust and improve their interpersonal relationships. The second target group is businesspersons who want to skilfully deal with interlocutors using listening techniques in order to win others' favour. Some guides target both groups.

Although the authors have different professions and slightly different target groups, they suggest a common goal: polishing listening skills in order to improve human relationships (*ningen kankei*), which ultimately leads to success in business or social life. They believe that being a good communicator is the key to success. However, this does not mean being a skilful speaker but rather being a competent listener, who can support others and win their trust. For example, Itō Akira, a male psychological consultant, says that you no longer need to feel pressure to give a useful or fun talk, but through simply being an attentive listener you will be able to make speakers talk more and feel confident or at ease, for which you will be thanked. Therefore, you will have wonderful interpersonal relationships (Itō 2003:270–271). If you are struggling in human relationships, Shibuya Shōzō (2010:3–4), a male researcher on human behaviour in sociology, argues that you

will continue to do so unless you improve your listening ability. This ability allows you to accept others' opinions, to deal with information, to bring insights into a particular matter, to support others and to become a likeable person. Other authors say that listening helps to 'win a relationship' (Itō 2003:title), to 'build a smooth relationship' (Matsuhashi 2009:203), to 'have a comfortable relationship' (Katayama 2009:5) and to 'gain a calm and healthy relationship' (Sawamura 2016:6). Improving listening ability and issues of human relationships are always linked with each other. Listening is a cure-all panacea for problems of interpersonal relationships.

In addition to the self-help literature, training courses also provide a chance to improve listening skills. A variety of advertisements for training courses exist online, including one-day workshops or correspondence courses etc., with a wide range of fees. I participated in three training courses in Tokyo and Kanagawa: a two-day intensive course, a weekly course (five weeks) and a one-off lecture lasting two hours. All offered chances for role-play. They aimed to teach participants for relatively specific reasons, such as being AL volunteers or supporting business people. However, they taught almost the same knowledge as the guidebooks, therefore I include analysis of training courses in this chapter.

The first training course I joined was the most expensive one I found online in 2018. It was organised by *Nihon keichō kyōkai* (a general incorporated foundation of the Japan Active Listening Ability Development Foundation) [ii]. I joined a two-day course held in Tokyo on 20 and 21 January 2018, from 10:30 to 18:30. This cost 47,000 yen (£320). The course consisted of a lecture and pair role-play exercises. There were five participants: two men in their 50s and 60s, two women in their 40s and 30s, and myself. One man said he was obliged to join this workshop by his manager in order to improve his communication skills. One woman said she wanted to start a fortune-telling business and therefore wanted to acquire listening skills. The course taught counselling-type listening but this could be useful in business or friendships.

The second workshop I participated in was the one run by *Tokutei NPO hōjin P.L.A*, which required attendance once a week for five consecutive weeks from 19 February to 26 March 2018 and lasting two hour and a half hours each time, from 13:30 to 16:00.[iii] 452 people had already

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[ii] This small foundation was established by Iwamatsu Masafumi, a man aged 45. 13 years ago, he learnt counselling skills and in 2013 he established this foundation, offering AL training courses for beginners as well as for those who aim to become AL lecturers.

[iii] *Tokutei NPO hōjin P.L.A* (the specified non-profit corporation P.L.A) was the founder of the longest and most famous telephone lifeline in Japan, called '*Inochi no denwa*'.

completed the training course before I joined. There were 20 participants, including four men. Twelve people were over 60, five were in their 40s and 50s and three, including me, were in their 20s and 30s. The fee was relatively low: 12,000 yen in total (about £80). There were always more than three facilitators, who were over 65 years old and had experience as telephone lifeline volunteers. The course had both lecturing and role-play parts. Three people were always grouped together in order to experience all three positions: a listener, speaker and observer. The course taught listening for social welfare rather than applying it to business or coaching etc.

The third course I participated in was named 'AL course to win one's huge trust' and was held by Hanayama, a female business coach in her 50s. In Japan, coaching, which is a type of business counselling, has become popular from 1990 to 2000 (Koike 2007:80, 178). Hanayama previously worked in a human resource department in a famous Japanese company for 10 years and now works as a business coach, which she has done for nine years. She hopes to help people before they get psychological problems and believes that asking questions and eliciting what people want are important. Therefore the course instructed listening influenced by techniques of business coaching. The course involved a two-hour lecture, including role-plays, and cost 3,500 yen (£25). Other than me, there was one male participant, in his 30s; he worked in a famous department store and wanted to improve his communication skills to manage his junior workers.

2.2 Attentive, expressive and empathetic listener

So, what do the listening guides and training courses teach? What kind of a listener is recommended? According to these sources, a good listener is one who is attentive, expressive and empathetic: in other words, someone who attentively listens to a speaker by making bodily and verbal expressions and who empathetically accepts what is said as a fact for the speaker. This type of caring listener is advocated in all guides and courses.

How, then, does one become such an ideal listener? First, this attentive, expressive and empathetic listener frequently shows *unazuki* (nodding of the head) and *aizuchi* (minimal response or interjection). *Unazuki* should be varied in type and speed. *Aizuchi*, commonly used to reassure speakers that listeners are giving attention, should also be diversified, such as: '*hō*', '*ee*!', 'and then?' or 'that is good!'. For instance, Itō (2003:76–80) describes uttering '*hē*' with a variety of modulations of tone, such as *hē!?* (surprise)*, hē...* (not interested in)*, hēe~* (jealous of you) and *hē*

(I see but not so interesting), explaining that this is the way to show attentiveness in conversation. In this way, a speaker feels that they are being heard and so will speak more, which will liven up the conversation. This conversation creates a favourable impression (*kōinshō*) and inspires trust in the listener. The author also introduces a case of failure, where a male employee listens to his female colleague and utters a simple '*hē*' repeatedly, which gives her the impression that he is not listening to or enjoying the conversation. In such a case, she will lose any motivation to talk with him, which means he loses her trust. Moreover, a listener should put *hē* in the right moment. For instance, a male friend, A, says, 'I went to Odaiba, Tokyo and then...', and a male friend, B, inserts '*hē!?'*(surprise). This is not the right timing, because what A really wanted to say is that he went there with a new girlfriend. A will lose his motivation to continue speaking and assume that B is not a person he can get along with. B should have synchronised his mind to A's mind by means of *unazuki* and *aizuchi*. *Unazuki* and *aizuchi* display listeners' attentiveness and expressiveness, which are the core ways to encourage a speaker to talk more, to enliven a conversation and to gain a favourable impression from a speaker.

The ideal listener should be careful about what they do with their eyes. He/she should look at a speaker's forehead, nose or mouth softly while listening. This soft eye contact signifies that one is listening and avoids threatening a speaker, unlike looking directly, therefore allowing the speaker to feel relaxed. Gazing at a person's eyes is only recommended when a conversation becomes enlivened and a listener senses the point which a speaker wants to emphasise. Looking into the eyes at the right moment can suggest an enthusiastic attitude (Nemoto 2015:63–65; Tanimoto 2015:124). The right mode and moment of eye contact allows speakers to converse comfortably.

A good listener mimics a speaker's body language, facial expressions, utterances and even emotions, which is called mirroring or echoing (*ōmu-gaeshi*). For example, when a speaker leans back in a chair, a listener does the same, like a mirror, which helps the listener to adjust his/her psychological wavelength (*shinri-teki na hachō*) with the speaker, resulting in giving the speaker the impression that the two resemble each other and enhancing affection (Matsuhashi 2009:90– 91). Mimicking facial expressions and tuning a listener's mind to a speaker's (*aite ni kanjō o awaseru*) also increase intimacy. For instance, when a senior manager says that his customer is content with his work, a young employee should adjust the emotion towards the manager, showing a cheerful facial expression and saying '*Hē!* Wonderful!*'*. Conversely, when a young employee,

looking sad, says, 'I need to talk with you...', a senior manager should also show a sad face, saying kindly, 'Yes, are you ok?' (Innovation Club 2009:150–153). Echoing a speaker's emotional words also nurtures a sense of ease and closeness. When a woman says, 'I am frustrated that my husband always returns home quite late', a listener (not specified as anyone) should echo the emotional words, 'You are frustrated...' (Matsuhashi 2009:116–117; Nemoto 2015:74–77). Mimicking speakers' bodily behaviour and facial expressions, reflecting emotional words and tuning one's mind to a speaker's mind prove a listener's attentiveness and empathy, and nurtures ease and intimacy between communicators.

Furthermore, the ideal listener avoids advising, criticising, denying, arguing, disagreeing or expressing opinions unless absolutely necessary. This works to affirm a speaker, who will then be able to open her/his mind towards a listener. In this way, the listener wins a speaker's favour and trust. Higuchi Yūichi (2008:112–113), a male writing coach who writes for businessmen, says that when a person tells his friend that he fought with his partner, the friend (the male listener) tends to say 'It is your fault', or starts advising the speaker based on his own experiences. This behaviour is a way to force the listener's opinion onto the speaker, which will not be appreciated. A speaker often simply wants someone to listen. Therefore, the ideal listener should avoid imposing their opinions. Similarly, Kikumoto Yūzō (2011:143–150), a male paid-telephone-listening service consultant, instructs that even when directly asked, advising a speaker will not be useful because the speaker has an answer in mind. He recalls his female client asking him for advice on her relationship with an untrustworthy man. The author used questions such as 'what do you think if he ...' in order to let her figure it out by herself. Reflecting the policy of no-advising or no-criticising, other authors also qualify the words 'advice' or 'advising' with the terms 'authoritative/impertinent' (*erasō*) or 'looking down on' (*ue kara mesen*) (Higuchi 2008:112–113; Nemoto 2015:98–99). The reason is that a speaker/client often has the ability to solve their issue by themselves, if they get a proper chance to speak and to be accepted, which is an idea that comes from the theory of counselling. Avoiding advising or criticising leads to creating an affinity with a speaker, and gives a speaker a chance to find a way to manage their feelings or problems.

A good listener deploys questioning techniques, which displays their interest in a conversation as well as encouraging a speaker to speak up more. For this to happen, a listener should choose an appropriate combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions, depending on the situation. For example, when meeting someone for the first time (no specified situation and relationship

explained), a listener is recommended to use closed-ended questions first and then to gradually shift to open-ended questions, e.g. 'Do you play sports?' or 'Do you like music?' (closed questions). A speaker will reply either yes or no, and then a listener should develop a conversation with an open-ended question, 'What kind of music do you like?' (Itō 2003:35–36). Closed-ended questions are easy to answer for a speaker and open-ended questions can deepen a conversation. The combination of these two types of questioning assists a listener in finding a topic which a speaker wants to talk about, and then the speaker feels that the listener is a fun person to spend time with. Asking questions enables a listener to investigate a desirable topic to talk about, to express their motivations to listen and to encourage a speaker to talk more, which in turn give a speaker a favourable impression.

The ideal listener, however, must avoid intimidating a speaker through questioning. For example, Itō (2003:26–31) suggests that managers in a workplace tend to ask their subordinates closed questions, such as 'Can you achieve this target?' or 'Can you absolutely say you will get a contract?', which makes their subordinates feel anxious about answering. Moreover, they are prone to ask extremely open-ended questions too, such as 'How is your job?' or 'What do you think about this number (in the report)?', which makes their subordinates confused. The right question to give to their subordinates would be 'How is your work going? Are there any aspects that you are struggling with?' These examples show that hierarchies intensify the intimidation caused by questioning. Intimidation also happens due to frequent usage of 'why' questions, such as 'Why did you make a mistake?' It is better for superiors not to use why questions frequently, to avoid intimidating subordinates (Matsuhashi 2009:192–193). Listeners can threaten speakers by posing questions, therefore they should carefully ask questions and avoid intimidating types of questions. These instructions indicate the tacit consent of sensitively handling a hierarchy in conversation.

Although a good listener has to be expressive bodily and verbally, such a listener restricts the amount of speaking they do in order for a speaker to take the lead in a conversation (Sawamura 2016:29–30). Regarding the ratio of listening and speaking for a listener, Innovation Club (2009:40), a business communication consulting company, says that it should stay at 8:2 for business occasions. Similarly, *Mental kea kyōkai* (2006:74) suggests that it should be 7:3 when conversing with a person with a problem. A male counsellor, Higashiyama Hirohisa (2000:8–13), who wrote a best-selling listening self-help book, even declares 'a good listener does not talk' (*yoi kikite wa hanasanai*) as a title.

However, not speaking at all is also problematic, creating the impression that one is a cold person (Sawamura 2016:31; Shibuya 2010:100–101). Therefore, when required to speak up or to advise, a listener must use 'I messages', saying 'I think..., what do you think?' (Sawamura 2015:190). This style allows a listener to express his/her own opinions while avoiding holding the floor and showing respect towards a speaker. By carefully controlling the number of articulations, a listener becomes actively responsible for a supportive position.

The ideal listener must acquire empathetic, not sympathetic listening skills. It is, indeed, difficult to find listening self-help literature which does not mention the word empathy (*kyōkan*). Empathy means understanding what a speaker thinks or feels, while sympathy (*dōkan*, *dōjō*) means agreeing with and having the same feelings as the speaker (Hiraki 2013:32; Iwamatsu 2014:63–69). For instance, when a speaker says, 'This coffee is delicious!', an empathetic listener replies '(I understand that) it is delicious (for you)', while a sympathetic listener answers 'I like this coffee too' (Iwamatsu 2014:46–47). Through empathetic listening, a listener puts herself/himself into the speaker's shoes while putting her/his own feelings aside, which helps the listener both in understanding the speaker non-judgementally and in maintaining a proper psychological distance between her/him and the speaker by avoiding agreeing/disagreeing. Therefore, an experienced listener switches their ears and minds to the empathetic listening mode from a normal listening mode when it is necessary.

Empathetic listening can be replaced with the word *yorisou* (standing by someone, emotionally snuggling up with). In the first training course, a female coach explained that AL means 'to understand an interlocutor's feeling, desire and struggle through *yorisou*, without a listener's own frame of reference', in other words empathetic listening. In the same vein, coaches in the second training course taught that their AL is to *yorisou* a client's feeling, but not to offer what a client seeks or wants. In his talk event, Iwanuma, a male AL coach, repeated that AL does not mean letting people talk more, but to *yorisou* a speaker's feeling, even when a speaker does not talk. *Yorisou* encompasses the core idea of the ideal listener being attentive and empathetic (see more details about *yorisou* in Chapter 5).

The ideal listener takes into account the environment and positioning at a table in interactions, which heavily influences communication. For instance, a place which listeners are familiar with, such as a café or hotel lounge, suits an important business discussion because the participants can be more relaxed, and a place with darker lighting, such as a bar, is fitting for an honest conversation

because communicators do not need to sense subtle facial reactions (Nemoto 2015:46–49; Shibuya 2010:64–67). In addition, sitting side by side with a speaker or facing a speaker obliquely suits private conversations, as communicators do not need to face each other directly, which brings about a relaxed mood, whereas sitting opposite each other creates a confrontational atmosphere, which is suitable for disputes (Itō 2003:115–120). The table shape matters as well: a square table works well for a formal meeting with a clear hierarchy and a round table is good for exchanging opinions in a friendly atmosphere (Shibuya 2010:42, 64–67, 159) (see more details about the environment in Chapter 4).

In order to be able to listen to others well, the ideal listener must be ready to listen to their inner self. One way of listening to oneself is understanding one's current physical and psychological conditions, such as being exhausted, sad or excited. This allows a listener to manage his/her mind, in order to calm down so as to listen to the speaker, or even to decide not to listen. Fujita Ushiho (2007:136), a female coaching trainer, likens the condition in which a listener cannot listen to others to the memory of a computer. Just as a computer has limited working memory, a listener also has a limited capacity to listen: that capacity sometimes does not work properly or fully, due to stress or pressure, and thus it is better to avoid having a conversation. Listening to oneself brings about a healthy relationship between listeners and their inner selves.

Listening to one's inner-self also means accepting one's own characteristics, e.g. being pretentious or having low self-esteem etc. Iwamatsu (2014:173–179) and Watanabe Naoki (2019:190–193), male counsellors, explain that people tend to deal with others as they treat themselves. Therefore, listeners who are hard on themselves are prone to be hard on speakers too, which obstructs empathetic listening. So as to offer empathetic listening, a listener needs to accept herself/himself. In the training course, Iwanuma said to participants that listeners should prioritise listening to themselves and having a healthy relationship with themselves, more than acquiring any knowledge and skills. He even taught the participants that listeners should praise themselves in order to maintain a healthy relationship with themselves: he lets them say 'I am the best!' out loud. Through listening to themselves, listeners can accept themselves and maintain healthy relationships with their inner-selves, so they can listen to others better.

Listening to oneself also signifies knowing one's listening habits, such as having particular topics or people which make a listener feel uncomfortable or on which they have a personal opinion (Iwamatsu 2014:166; Kunitake 2019:58–63; Sawamura 2016:158–160). These listening habits can

damage empathetic listening. To realise one of the habits, for instance, in a training course offered by Iwamatsu, participants practised empathetic listening in both sad and happy conversations. The participants come to understand which conversation is more difficult for them in the capacity of listening. It is difficult to overcome listening habits; however, at least being aware of these habits is useful in order to control the listener's own mind[iv].Therefore, several authors recommend listeners to listen to themselves.

Finally, the ideal listener has to be interested in, and to love, people. This is more than ordinary advice. A listener who is interested in people is willing to get to know others, and therefore naturally conveys explicit reactions in conversation, which become non-verbal indications of interest in a speaker. Therefore, 'the best skill is to favour others' (Katayama 2009:64; Matsuhashi 2009:210). On the other hand, a listener who does not like people tends to display signs of rejection, which causes avoidance of communication. For example, Katayama Ikkō (2009:64–69), a male editor of business books, reflects that he did not try to like his boss when he was working as an employee, which brought about an uncomfortable atmosphere and stress in the workplace. Trying to like people is now an important listening skill. Moreover, being a likeable person, according to him, is important because such people are good listeners. So as to learn from them, the author provides a list of criteria for a likeable person, such as not lying, praising others and being calm etc (Katayama 2009:70–71). The list seems to go beyond the scope of listening; however, being a likeable person is now the role of the listener.

[iv] This tendency－listening both to oneself and others －can be considered as a part of a phenomenon called psychologism or therapeutic culture, which is spreading in Japan. This phenomenon represents the situation where people acquire knowledge or skills of psychology or therapy and use these in their everyday lives (see more details in Chapter 4.1). A part of this phenomenon is an inclination towards self-focus: in other words, self-worship, selfism, a psychological person and narcissist. For example, sociologist Rieff Philip (1959; 1966) proposes the spread of the psychoanalytic view in everyday lives, which Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis funded the basis, and the emergence of a psychological person in America. This person uses strategies of self-management rather than traditional or religious forms of self-discipline. The person's focus is no longer a community but themselves. A more recent example of narcissistic people shows a similar orientation. Historian Christopher Lasch (1991:xv) argues that an end of competitive individualism has taken place since the 1970s, and that there has been an emergence of narcissism, which is an extremely intensified version of individualism. Narcissists only care about themselves: they exploit and depend on others' approval and admiration; therefore, they maintain limited, superficial and dissatisfied relationships, named 'the devastation of personal life', which Lasch warns about, rather than privatism or isolation of the self. The climate of a focus on the inner-self corresponds to the nature of listening skills currently recommended in Japan. Similarly, Anthony Giddens (1992:30) argues that people now continuously interrogate and reconstruct the self, which he calls 'the reflexive project of the self', and therapy and self-help manuals contribute to this phenomenon. An aspect of self-oriented listening in Japan could be understood in relation to this kind of narrative, as listening skills contribute to enhance self-awareness and to winning others' favour.

This advice differs from other instructions I explained earlier, as altering not only surface behaviour but also the deep mind. Famously proposing emotional labour, sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild (2012:33) introduces the idea of 'surface' and 'deep' acting. The former displays expressions that are aligned with organisational expectations without changing one's internal feelings, while the latter expresses natural and genuine emotions which are socially required and which change one's internal feelings along with the surface expressions. The self-help authors do not teach a person to conceal their true feelings; they recommend having respect and love without doubts, which means 'deep-acting' listening and rigid self-control. Listening is no longer a behaviour with superficial bodily and verbal expressions but becomes benevolent action with a carefully controlled mind (see more details about listeners' emotional labour in Chapter 5). Therefore, although one of the purposes of being the ideal listener is to be released from pressure in interactions, the listener will never become fully emancipated from this pressure.

Thus far, I have explored the norms and ideals related to becoming a good listener promoted in self-help books and training courses. A good listener is one who is attentive, expressive and empathetic. This listener manages not only superficial attitudes and behaviour, such as *aizuchi* or reflecting emotional words, but also controls her/his own emotions, such as not expressing opinions and changing their attitude if necessary, e.g. loving people. Therefore, the listener is involved in heavy emotional labour (although authors do not mention this), and will never be released from the pressure of being a good communicator. A good listener realises that actively staying in a supportive listening position brings the power to win others' favour and trust without offending or threatening anyone; this eventually leads to success in business or social life.

However, through further analysis, it seems that the authors advise slightly different skills and attitudes in specific situations with certain relationships. I analyse this point in the following section.

2.3 Therapeutic listening and zealous listening

In specific examples, such as in a senior–junior worker relationship or a parent–child relationship, the ideal listener seems to be advised to use one of two different types of listening: therapeutic listening or zealous listening. Therapeutic listening has the characteristics of being caring, of supporting a speaker and of avoiding advising and interrogating. These therapeutic and

caring attitudes allow a speaker to feel accepted, to open her/his mind and to face a problem by herself/himself. Through these processes, a speaker appreciates and trusts a listener, therefore a listener can improve their interpersonal relationships. The term is often used in psychology and communication studies. For example, communication researchers Andrew Wolvin and Carolyn Coakley (1996:265) categorise listening into five types, depending on the situation; one of these is therapeutic listening, defined as 'listening to provide a troubled sender with the opportunity to talk through a problem', which is the same meaning I use in this research.

Therapeutic listening in Japan is heavily influenced by the theory of AL. AL comes from the style of counselling called 'client-centred therapy' suggested by clinical psychologist Carl Ransom Rogers. This counselling style requires counsellors to acquire three attitudes: unconditional positive regard, empathetic understanding and congruence (Rogers 1980:115–116); in Japanese: *mujōken no juyō, kyōkan teki rikai* and *jiko ittchi.* Unconditional positive regard means listening non-judgementally; empathetic understanding is to understand that what is said is true for a speaker; and congruence means maintaining the consistency of a listener's self. Guides written by counsellors and communication professionals tend to promote AL; for them the word AL and therapeutic listening are synonyms. Authors in the field of business and other occupations do not use the term AL; however, they also suggest a similar stance of listening. Therapeutic listening is one of the main listening styles recommended in self-help books.

The other type of listening, which I name zealous listening, is not explicitly mentioned and is not distinguished from therapeutic listening by authors. This is characterised by actively asking questions, strategically articulating responses and entertaining replies, and performing as an aspiring learner. These enthusiastic techniques allow a listener not only to support a conversation but also to make the conversation fun, to show excitement in interaction and to display respect towards the speaker. Eventually the listener will win the speaker's favour and trust. Although they do not use this exact term, zealous listening is often advised by authors in the field of business, but not only by them: counsellors and communication professionals also recommend it.

These two different types of listening styles are recommended for distinct groups of people: therapeutic listening for people in authoritative positions and zealous listening for subordinates. The different target groups reveal the importance of sensing a hierarchy in interaction.

In the case of therapeutic listening, for instance, when a male senior employee listens to a male junior person who is unmotivated to work or wants to quit his job, the senior needs to utilise

therapeutic listening by asking questions empathetically. Through this process, the junior can feel understood and think through his situation by himself, in addition to being led to trust the senior (Nemoto 2015:104–107). Similarly, Fukuda Takeshi (2012:48–50), a male speaking coach, once advised a male senior manager in a company to express attentive attitudes, such as *unazuki* and *aizuchi*, to respond in a caring way and to let his junior employee talk more. The author also recommended the manager to stop listening to his junior employee with crossed arms and closed eyes, which made the junior reluctant to talk. In this case, therapeutic listening was deemed to be beneficial for both the manager and his junior employee. Therapeutic stances offered by listeners in superior positions enable subordinates to deal with their issues, to voice their honest opinions and to trust their superiors.

On the other hand, zealous listening is suggested for subordinates. For instance, when listening to a senior who loves to lecture or to blame other employees, a subordinate should perform as an inferior, listening to the senior sincerely and then saying things like: 'I have now realised my immaturity (*jibun no itaranasa ga minishimite wakarimashita*). Thank you for explaining'. When interacting with an experienced senior, a subordinate should perform as an aspiring learner, asking 'Could you please advise me on this project?' (Itō 2003:205–218). These attitudes enable one to exhibit respect towards the superior speaker, and therefore the superior will be able to feel trusted and respected. This speaker will then trust the inferior listener in return.

Importantly, these two types of listening allow a listener to remain in a certain position in a hierarchy. First, therapeutic listening allows a listener to remain in an authoritative position. This listening is often used for caring for or assisting a speaker, which indicates the nature of being a helper or caregiver. Acting as a helper or caregiver tends to put others in the position of being a helpee or seeker: in other words, in a subordinate position. Therapeutic listening, therefore, possesses hidden or silent authoritative power. On the other hand, a therapeutic listener tries to be attentive, empathetic and kind, so this listener's authoritative attitudes would be concealed to some extent. Therefore, therapeutic listening functions as a mask of authority. This concealing act, however, does not change the nature of the hierarchy. For example, Watanabe Miwako (2008:146–149), a female surgeon, says that to reduce patients' anxieties, she tries to smile as much as possible while listening. Her smile disguises her authority as a surgeon, but this does not change the hierarchy between her and her patient. As this example shows, therapeutic listening can conceal

listeners' authoritative power in some respects, but it maintains their hidden authority. Therefore, I consider therapeutic listening as 'a mask for maintaining silent authority'[v].

Why do superiors need to conceal their authority? Authors probably do not recommend becoming a caring and empathetic listener only for egalitarian reasons, but rather to persuade or influence subordinates more. Through investigating *kawaii* (cute) culture, Japanologist Brian McVeigh (1996) points out that a soft impression helps authorities to prove that they are in fact not intimidating; thus, their persuasion and control of subordinates become easier. This mechanism resembles 'grooming' in psychology: it is the predatory act of manoeuvring another individual through befriending them or building a trusting relationship with them and making the individual dependent, likely to trust or be isolated, resulting in sexual abuse, financial extortion, exploitation or creating difficulties for them to disagree or doubt (Knoll 2010; Sinnamon 2017; *Out of the FOG* online, accessed November 2019). Predators first typically employ 'attentiveness, sensitivity, (false) empathy and plenty of positive reinforcement' (*Out of the FOG*), such as gifts, money, praise or smiling. This phenomenon often occurs when a power imbalance exists. Attentive and empathetic listening by authoritative figures, therefore, does not mean the softening of the hierarchy, rather they apply it both for intensifying the hierarchy and using their power.

On the other hand, zealous listening keeps a listener in a subordinate position. This subordinate listener actively engages in a conversation, such as by articulating questions or comments, displaying respect towards the speaker, disguising a desire to win the speaker's trust or hiding a rebellious intention or indifference towards the conversation with the speaker. The speaker can, thus, stay in a spotlight, receive a respectful impression and remain at the top of the hierarchy and will eventually trust the listener. For instance, when a person in a superior position in a workplace does not stop talking, a subordinate male employee should listen enthusiastically, accept what is said, summarise it and then ask the senior if it is fine for him now to suggest his idea (Itō 2003:205–218). His zealous and subordinate listening helps him to disguise his true

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[v] The three training courses on listening taught participants therapeutic listening, not zealous listening. It is because they aimed to help others, which consisted of a statuse of authority as givers. The courses also taught how to avoid authoritative attitudes, such as crossing arms and legs or interrogating. The listening proposed by Hanayama, a female business-career coach, included the same elements of therapeutic listening but exceptionally taught proactive questioning techniques: for example, short questions, such as 'And?' 'So?' 'How about others?' and 'For example?' (Usually, therapeutic listeners try to avoid questioning inquisitively.) She taught such a method because she presupposes the case in which a listener was clearly expected to remain in an authoritative and helper position like a coach, therefore, Hanayama's listening style consists of both therapeutic elements and proactive questioning.

feelings of irritation and boredom, and to voice his opinion without offending his superior. Zealous listening teaches a listener not to hold the floor in a conversation, not to offend superiors, and not directly to challenge the hierarchy, but strategically to express their opinion or interest. As a result, the listener will win a speaker's favour and trust. Therefore, for a subordinate, zealous listening can be a streetwise skill to ingratiate oneself with a speaker and to fit in in a hierarchy. In this sense, zealous listening can be 'an interactional weapon for the weak'.

Anthropologist James Scott's concept (1985) proposes a similar concept; 'a weapon of the weak'. He investigated how peasants in a Malaysian village, who were usually put in subordinate positions, disguised their acts of resistance, such as 'foot-dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on'; Scott named these 'weapons of the weak' (Scott 1985:xvi). These acts of resistance happened off-stage, with little coordination or planning, demonstrated anonymously and disguised or made ambiguous their messages. Therefore, these are indirect confrontation towards authority. These neither brought about revolutionary consequences nor a direct negation of the current hegemony, but indirectly expressed forms of peasant's everyday resistance. Similarly, zealous listening is an everyday tool to deal with a hierarchy by disguising one's messages. As a result of the listening, the powerless listener eventually stays in their current position, in the same way that the peasants in Malaysia cannot change the hierarchy.

However, there are several fundamental differences between Scott's concept and zealous listening as an interactional weapon for the weak. Unlike Scott's concept, zealous listening is neither an anonymous act, nor an off-stage strategy. Moreover, zealous listening does not aim to resist people in power but to ingratiate oneself with an authority and to gain benefits such as protection, information or opportunities from authorities. In this sense, zealous listening can empower listeners in less powerful positions. Therefore, zealous listening does not create power struggles, but rather it mitigates them, which is the fundamental difference from Scott's concept.

Similar examples of cases where subordinate figures gain power through indirect ways can be found in different Japanese contexts. A researcher of Japanese religion and society Helen Hardacre (1984) observed women in *Reiyūkai Kyōdan* (a Japanese religious community), who usually had lower status, overturning their hierarchy in both indirect and disguised ways, such as raising their own children to be leaders of the community. She named these methods 'the strategies of weakness'. Sociologist Ogasawara Yuko (1998:101; 1996) also observed Valentine's Day

chocolate-giving in offices, concluding that the giving of chocolates by OLs (office ladies), who are subordinates in a workplace, means women's temporary empowerment. They cooperate to distribute chocolate-giving, in terms of the number of chocolates given to whom and the quality. These chocolates represent 'a barometer of popularity', declaring their judgement on men. The women in these two cases do not confront their superiors directly but manage to gain partial and/or temporary power indirectly by disguised ways. Similarly, zealous listening enables a listener in a weak position to disguise disagreement or an intention to challenge, and eventually to win the other's trust and favour, which could in turn bring partial and temporary power in the form of money, protection or an opportunity to stand out among others.

Occasionally a subordinate can use therapeutic listening as a weapon too, sometimes with the risk of offending authorities. Although authors normally recommend those who are in subordinate positions to use zealous listening, Nemoto Hiroyuki (2015:108–109), a male counsellor, recommends a junior employee use therapeutic listening in a case where a superior does not stop grumbling. He instructs the junior person first to listen actively and to accept what has been said empathetically, but at some point, suggests that she/he can say, 'I see, so what can I do for you?' Nemoto claims that at this point the senior would stop grumbling because he feels understood and accepted by the junior. However, Nemoto overlooks that, in reality, the subordinate's supportive words potentially threaten their hierarchy, altering a senior–junior relationship to a helpee–helper relationship. As a result, in order to keep the current hierarchy, the senior stops grumbling. As this example shows, a listener in a subordinate position will occasionally be able to use therapeutic listening to a speaker in a superior position. However, the listener has to acknowledge a potential risk of threatening the hierarchy with the use of therapeutic listening.

There is another circumstance in which subordinates can gain temporary power by adopting a therapeutic attitude. This was the case when subordinate female employees in a factory acquired power by acting as surrogate mothers. Anthropologist Kondo Dorinne (1990:294–296) worked in a small, suburban confectionery factory and found a clear hierarchy between the younger male full-time artisans, as superiors, and female part-timers in their 40s and 50s, as subordinates. She witnessed that the female employees invited the younger artisans home, offered them a meal, chatted to them, provided rent money and helped with other small chores. They also brought 'a humanized work atmosphere', meaning a source of support and emotional care, which eventually created a 'company as family' concept. She argues that this motherly position permitted them to

have power over the younger artisans as this was a caregiver/superior position that allowed the artisans to indulge their selfish whims. This example shows that a caregiver or superior attitude can be accepted by people in power when it is covered by maternal benevolence. This is one of the strategies used by hostesses, especially owner Mamas and senior hostesses. Their therapeutic attitudes are accepted by male customers, who are in superior positions, because their attitudes are based on feminine and caring behaviour.

The other implicit rule of this acceptance is being considered mature. In the confectionery factory, the female employees were clearly older than the younger artisans. Senior hostesses in their 40s to 60s are often the same age as male customers, or have an only small age gap. Therefore, more precisely, therapeutic listening or attitudes offered by people in weaker positions are accepted when they are accompanied by a maternal and mature atmosphere.

Deciding to use either therapeutic or zealous listening can be difficult when communicators are sensitive towards the power balances, or hierarchies are not clearly fixed, such as in interactions with a younger child or older parent. For instance, when a small boy loses a football match, his parents should attentively and empathetically listen to the boy and say, 'It was so close!', without advising or asking many questions (i.e. therapeutic listening). Then the child will feel understood and start talking (Hiraki 2013:84–87). If the parents ask many questions of the boy, he will sense an authoritarian attitude shown by the parents. By avoiding this situation, the parents can conceal their superior position and help their child, although the reality of their relationship with the child is still a helper-helpee one. This is one example which a communicator should sensitively deal with a power imbalance. In another example, when listening to an older parent worrying about some issues, Nemoto (2015:118–119) recommends that a child (listener) should let an older parent acknowledge that the child is an independent adult and say 'Anything else I can do for you?' (i.e. therapeutic listening). The older parent would not want to bother his/her child out of politeness or pride; however, the author insists that a child-parent relationship should be changed to a helper-helpee one in this case, which means overturning the hierarchy by using therapeutic listening. The two examples show the importance of the appropriate choice and use of both therapeutic and zealous listening, depending on the situation.

In one of the training courses, I encountered a situation where I unintentionally changed my listening mode to zealous listening, although the course was teaching us therapeutic listening. This brought about a debate. After learning the concept of empathetic listening, participants had to role-

play. I was responsible for the listener's position at this time. The speaker was Fujimoto, a woman in her late 40s. The topic of conversation was an issue related to one's friend or neighbour. Fujimoto talked about her neighbour, a woman in her 70s, who gave Fujimoto's family a lot of nice food that she could no longer eat. Fujimoto felt sorry that she did not have anything to return but her neighbour seemed not to care about return gifts. Although Fujimoto expressed her slight anxiety, I felt she accepted the reality and was not actually bothered by this situation, therefore I replied to her 'Um...if your neighbour seems still to be happy, I reckon it is ok...? Uh...what do you think?', which is not a typical reply of AL; I did not repeat her emotional words, such as 'feeling bad', and articulated my own opinion. Fujimoto continued expressing her feelings and episodes as she had to talk until her speaking time ended. In the end, the facilitator pointed out that I should have focused on her feelings, saying 'Ah, you feel a bit sorry...' However, Fujimoto disagreed, saying that she wanted to know the third person's opinion to confirm her stance, so she felt comfortable with my reply.

What I did was probably zealous listening, showing an attentive attitude, but not expressing a caring or helping attitude. What the facilitator recommended to me was therapeutic listening. However, there was a clear hierarchy between Fujimoto and myself in terms of age. If I had said, 'Ah, you feel a bit sorry...', I would become a helper, which would force Fujimoto to stay in a helpee's position. Fujimoto would sense a slight authority from me, which might change our hierarchy. Therefore, agreeing with her opinion, saying my honest opinion and asking her opinion again with the attitude of a learner was the way to maintain our current hierarchy. Like the self-help literature, coaches do not consider how age differences affect communication and how being in a helper's position influences interactions. This is probably because authors and coaches are likely to be older and experienced listeners who are clearly in the position to teach and help others.

Carefully dealing with the power balance by listening is tacit knowledge and seems to be taken for granted by authors and coaches, so only a few authors explain this factor. In his self-help/essay book about listening, a professor of education and communication Saitō Takashi (2012:94–95) refers to this tacit knowledge: interlocutors need the manifestation of their position, which explains what kind of relationship they are having, rather than the content, and requires the right understanding of the relationship. He presupposes the importance of dealing with the power balance. Thus, the way of listening matters before the content. Similarly, Sawamura Naoki (2016:28–30), a male counsellor, warns listeners not to deal with conversation as a power game

even if listeners feel defeated by the fact that they are speaking far less than the other party. He suggests that in general, a listener should put oneself in a lower position, through, for example, acting as a learner, and elevate a speaker to a higher position, especially in the case of business clients or workplace authorities. In other words, he basically suggests adopting zealous listening. He elaborates on this by referring to the terms 'desire for recognition' and 'reaction for defence'. According to him, people want to help others, to contribute to something and to be thanked, which can be called 'desire for recognition'. At the same time, they do not want to be looked down on or to be insulted, which can be called 'reaction for defence'. Listeners can satisfy this speakers' 'desire for recognition' and 'reaction for defence' by acting as a learner or helpee, so Sawamura suggests that listeners should take into account power balances in this sense. Recognising a 'hierarchical relationship, selecting an appropriate form of listening and putting oneself into the right position in conversation are necessary processes for the ideal listener.

In summary, this section has attempted to provide an overview of the normative and ideal listener. In a general context, authors and coaches describe an expressive, attentive and empathetic listener as the ideal. Such listeners intensively manage their bodies and minds, through acquiring expressive skills, embodying caring attitudes and loving people. In specific contexts, the authors tend to recommend two different forms of listening: therapeutic listening for authorities, and what I call zealous listening for subordinates. Therapeutic listening enables a superior to support a subordinate member with less authoritative attitudes while keeping an authoritative position. Therapeutic listening can become 'a mask of silent authority'. Conversely, zealous listening allows a listener to stay overtly in a subordinate position but discreetly to express one's opinion and to control a conversation without holding the floor of a conversation or offending people in power. I call this listening 'an interactional weapon of the weak' in interaction. These two different types of listening indicate the importance of sensing a power balance and of demonstrating the right position in the conversation. They are the unwritten rules and are seen as the art of listening in contemporary Japan. Despite their importance, authors and coaches take these rules for granted, therefore the question of how 'power' – age gap, gender difference, a helper-helpee relationship and the presence of money – influence listening behaviour is not described. I analyse this point based on my ethnographical data, and illustrate how therapeutic and zealous listening work, in reality, in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

There is one more point that is worth noting: in self-help literature, the ideal listener is often represented by women. How do these authors describe women as good listeners, and why? What does this mean in contemporary Japan? I discuss these questions in the next section.

2.4 Changing the feminine and inferior image of listening

The self-help literature on listening tends to describe women as being good listeners and men as being incompetent listeners. Women are characterised as being attentive, caring and patient. For Sawamura (2016:69–74), women have an innate disposition towards empathy and expressiveness, which makes them competent listeners. Women are naturally inclined to *yorisou*, to not miss out on making an extra effort to accept what is said, to nod deeply and to respond empathetically with phrases such as 'It must have been hard for you...'. Female counsellor Hiraki Noriko (2013:38–39) also explains that women articulate a wider range of emotional expressions, such as 'It must be hard for you' or 'Good for you!', but men do not. Thus, women tend to be better listeners than men. Itō (2003:65–66) also says that women are good at naturally asking questions which stimulate imagination, such as 'If you got 3 billion yen, what would you do?' Matsuhashi (2009:76–77), a male communication consultant, notes that women are raised to listen thoughtfully and to cooperate with others, therefore they are good at listening. These examples show that authors generalise and praise women's abilities to be caring and expressive.

Furthermore, the authors compliment women whom they have met at random as good listeners. For instance, Shibuya (2010:135) praises a female stylist, Ishida-san, who used to work as an experienced editor, listening to people patiently using the echoing technique. He entitles this episode in his book: 'A wise wife will never disagree (with one's words)' (*Kensai wa kesshite hitei shinai*) although he does not state whether Ishida-san is a wife. This episode simply strengthens the impression that women should be patient listeners. Higashiyama (2000:47–53) gives an example of women at *idobata kaigi* (meeting at a well and socialising with neighbours), calling the chapter: 'Housewives in the past were good listeners' (*Mukashi no shufu wa kiki jōzu*). He explains that such women were capable of pretending to be engaged in a conversation while actually distancing their feelings from speakers' emotions, which is, in fact, a type of counsellor's technique called empathetic listening. For instance, one says, 'These days, my husband comes back home quite late' and then the others say, 'Mine too', even though it is not true for them. They

do not interrogate a conversation too deeply in order to keep a proper distance from each other and to maintain an equal relationship between them. This explanation recreates an image of women being skilful listeners. Katayama (2009:84) introduces his female hairdresser as being a competent listener. She first accepts everything he says, and then gives him her honest opinion with her natural smile. This example also demonstrates a caring and patient female listener. Apart from one or two famous male TV personalities and comedians, the authors are prone to complementing women's listening skills.

The most frequently cited example of professional listeners are women working in hostess clubs. The authors explain that hostesses listen to customers grumbles; reward customers for their hard work; getting interested in their talk regardless of a topic; flattering the customers' self-esteem; and empathetically replying with phrases like 'Ah, it must be so tough for you'. Therefore, even very quiet people eventually talk a lot (Itō 2003:204; Fujita 2007:46; Saitō 2012:35; Makino 2013:50–51). We can see the traits of attentive, expressive and empathetic listeners coming up again in these hostesses' examples. Furthermore, Nemoto (2015:120) praises hostesses' communication as being based on their observational abilities. Matsuhashi (2009:171) values a hostess's ability to offer strategic topics of discussion which lead to the discovery of common points of interest, such as hobbies, travels or places of birth. Hostesses are the stereotypical image of female ideal listeners.

Conversely, men are criticised as being inexpressive and non-empathetic communicators who always try to find a chance to give advice or speak. Itō (2003:65–66, 226–229, 232–234) states that men do not empathetically accept what is said and tend to reply in a monotonous voice and without emotional expressions. For example, when a male colleague reports a work success, other male colleagues do not acknowledge his colleague's effort due to their own competitiveness, saying things like 'You just got lucky'. Men also generalise a speaker's issue and tend to devalue it. Matsuhashi (2009:76–77) explains that men are raised to speak, criticise and disagree in order to stand out, a tendency related to masculinity. Hiraki and Sawamura (2013:38–39; 2016:69–71) claim that men tend to interrogate or advise rather than show empathy while listening, which is not necessarily appreciated by a speaker. These examples indicate that the authors portray men as incompetent listeners, so the authors identify listening skills as being gender-specific.

In Japanese contexts, some scholars reveal the link between listening and femininity while they also show how speaking represents masculinity. Linguist Nakamura Momoko's study

(2012:31–47) on the roots of 'women's language' explores how, for several hundred years, conduct literature advised women to refrain from speaking. In the Edo period, such literature for women basically taught them to restrict talking or being loquacious, and to interact with others modestly. From the Meiji period onwards, the literature started insisting that although women should not speak a lot, they should speak up when required. However, the times that women were required to speak was still limited to matters at home and raising children, and not in public. As evidence of this restriction, for example, academic scholar Fukuzawa Yukichi and journalist Nakae Chōmin denounced women for discussing academic knowledge and language as impertinent behaviour which went beyond their abilities (Nakamura 2012:45–47). This change was caused by the emergence of the new value summarised by the slogan 'a good wife and wise mother'. Under this slogan, women were expected to be useful for the project of unifying the nation and strengthening nationalistic power (Ogawa 1991 cited in Nakamura 2012:43). Nakamura suggests that women were often constrained from speaking and expressing themselves through being controlled by values based on gender ideologies.

Anthropologist Takie Sugiyama Lebra (1976:77–78) also points out similar conversational behaviour which women had to embody. Describing complementarity in Japanese social life, she refers to the linguistic dimorphism – 'one party "talks down" and the other complementarily "talks up"' – appearing in heterosexual interactions; 'the Japanese male speaks a dominant, masculine language that the female complements by a language of feminine inferiority'. From preschool onwards, Japanese women in the pre-war and wartime era were trained in disciplines that Lebra named 'femininity training', including 'reticence, a soft voice, polite and feminine style of speech, and avoidance of exposing the oral cavity', all of which were encompassed by the notion of modesty (Lebra 1984:42). As Nakamura and Lebra found, women were taught to be quiet and modest. Accordingly, the role of passive listening tended to be assigned to feminine gender roles. This tendency connotes certain images of listening; being obedient and patient. Therefore, listening used to have not only an image of femininity but also of inferiority.

The link between listening and inferiority is often observed by authors of self-help books. For example, Itō (2003:8) states that one of the reasons people do not become good listeners is the belief that listeners are seen as inferior. Matsuhashi (2009:72) similarly points out that in order to show the attitude 'I am superior', some people are inclined to interrupt a speaker and to take over the role of speaking. Higashiyama (2000:106–108) refers to the phenomenon that junior or

subordinate members tend to listen, while senior or authoritative members are prone to speaking due to the seniority system. Fujita (2007:50, 84–85) recalls an episode where, during her listening training course in a company, a male manager said that he feels defeated when he listens to his lower-ranking employees. Matsuhashi (2009:76–77) explains that in general men tend to feel that listening and accepting what is said equates to being obedient and subordinate. Several authors introduce the unpleasant example where a male boss does not listen and keeps lecturing a junior employee (Itō 2003:206, 209; Nemoto 2015:108–109). In these examples, men in general, or male seniors, are inclined to connect listening behaviour to inferiority. Therefore, a certain image of communication becomes visible: feminine and inferior listening and masculine and superior speaking.

Scholars have also observed the situation where subordinates have to listen to their seniors, which indicates the link between listening and inferiority. For example, in her classic study of Japanese society, anthropologist Nakane Chie (1970:33–35) observes how Japanese businessman communicate in a clear hierarchical fashion. She depicts senior or elderly men (who usually occupy a position of power) monopolising a conversation, while junior members listen and never argue or contradict their superiors. It is very rare that these senior speakers let their juniors participate in a mutual conversation. Similarly, economist Tsuda Masumi (1987:71) mentions an instance where a young businessman reports having to listen to his two superiors complaining about one another in a club all night long. Anthropologist Befu Harumi (1974) also demonstrates how superiors in a party are allowed to dominate, or are even *responsible* for dominating a conversation and others should enact as supporting actors in a dinner-entertainment occasion, such as drinking with employees. The former is allowed to speak longer, to bring up new topics and to interrupt others' talk, while the latter politely listens, asks questions, makes exaggerated reactions, punctuates the conversation, makes it interesting with little jokes or light remarks and leaves any punchlines for the former. This subordinates' listening style exactly fits my category of zealous listening. Not only authors of self-help guides but also scholars find the tendency for listening responsibility to be assigned to people in lower ranks and for speaking rights to be assigned to authorities.

In reality, people in superior positions can choose to either speak or listen. Evidence can be found in cases where an authority figure remains silent. Investigating different meanings of silence, Lebra (1987) says: 'Verbal unresponsiveness is a male prerogative or a strategy for protecting male

dignity. Conversely, verbal readiness is associated with the accommodative role of the woman, based on conjugal examples. Therefore, silence does not always mean staying in a subordinate position and is not always an obligation for women. Lebra continues that, similarly in workplaces, an inferior must talk if a superior exercises her/his prerogative of silence, while an inferior is obliged to be silent if a superior indulges her/himself by speaking. Therefore, those who are in higher rankings are able to select conversation modes. Lebra elaborates her opinion, pointing out that according to Japanese proverbs, sometimes a man of few words is trusted more than a loquacious man. For example, *bigen shin narazu* ('Beautiful speech lacks sincerity'). Even among Japanese politicians, some prime ministers have not been blessed with eloquence at all, which indicates that men do not necessarily achieve dominance by speaking. Therefore, listening or being silent might not necessarily imply inferiority.

However, authors of self-help literature seem to be sensitive about the feminine and inferior image of listening. Therefore, they attempt to alter this conventional image, to turn it into a proactive and powerful one. One strategy they adopt to do this is by using powerful words for headings and phrases. For example, the most common phrase is 'the power/competency of listening' (*kiku chikara*) (Innovation Club 2009) or 'the power of listening to change your life' (Fukuda 2013). The word *chikara* – meaning power, competency and ability – rose to prominence when the Central Education Council promoted the phrase '*ikiru chikara*' (zest for living) in 1996. And then in 1998, artists Akasegawa Genpei *et al.* proposed '*rōjin ryoku*' (meaning the ability of elderly people), which was nominated as the buzzword of the year. Ever since, the phrase 'power/ability of something' has been widely used, such as '*nayamu chikara*' (the power to worry), '*comunikēshon-ryoku*' (the ability of communication) or '*joshi-ryoku*' (things that women should be able to do and be ladylike) (Kondō 2014). Investigating the use of *chikara* in three business magazines' special editions focusing on workability, sociologist Makino Tomokazu (2009) found that the word is associated with the qualities that assist businessmen in surviving in a competitive society. *Chikara* clearly gives readers a powerful and functional impression of listening.

Other examples also provide strong and active connotations and repudiate the conventional, feminine and inferior image. For example, listening is 'the ultimate weapon to win in business and human relations' (Itō 2003), good listeners can 'grasp people's minds' (Katayama 2009), 'all successful people are good listeners' (Nemoto 2015) and good listeners use 'muscular and robust questions' (*kinniku-shitsu na shitsumon*) (Tanimoto 2015). 'Muscular and robust questions',

according to the author, should be prepared by getting up at 5 am, due to the freshness of one's brain at that hour, a process that is akin to muscle training. Tanimoto (2015:75–91) elaborates that these questions have three traits. First, they must capture (*sasaru*) a speaker's heart. Second, they should show viewpoints that are distinct from rivals. Finally, they must draw on a listener's strength. One such question is the one the author asked a manager of Starbucks coffee. Before the interview with him, she visited several Starbucks cafes and observed the atmosphere, menus and service, formulating her own critical opinion of a sandwich menu. She asked him, 'How are the sales of the sandwiches on the new menu doing? In my opinion...' This thoroughly prepared question containing her original insight impressed the manager. Tanimoto's term implies not only the use of a powerful, functional image but even a masculine type of listening.

The second strategy is pairing listening with the powerful image of speaking. For example, authors explain that those who are believed to be competent speakers actually use skilful listening techniques, such as asking questions and deploying responses rhythmically, and eventually take the initiative in conversation (Itō 2003:135–136; Nemoto 2015:124; Watanabe 2008:22, 81). Following the same logic, Matsuhashi (2009:35) was told that he was good at speaking, even though he had stayed in a listener's position for two hours while selling a product. Being a good listener is equated with being a competent speaker.

The third strategy is emphasising the advantage of an addressee'/receiver's position in conversations. For example, Katayama (2009:196–199) states that the spirit of giving way to another (*yuzuriai no seishin*) or accepting others' opinions and compromising with others rather than strongly imposing one's own opinion is called the power of listening, which eventually leads to valuable communications. Fukuda and Nemoto (2012:221; 2015:121–125) quote the Japanese proverb 'a good speaker is a good listener' (*hanashi jōzu wa kiki jōzu*) and invert it as 'a good listener is a good speaker'. This is because listening well is instrumental in understanding others, which in turn helps a listener to express themselves better. Staying in a receiver's position first yields a benefit for a listener.

Through these three strategies (inserting powerful words or phrases, linking with the power of speaking and promoting the advantage of an addressee'/receiver's position), authors of self-help literature attempt to change the feminine, inferior image of listening to a proactive and functional, or even masculine, image. If, then, listening is a very powerful skill as the authors advertise, does this mean that women who are said to be good listeners acquire power in everyday life by

deploying their useful and powerful listening in the modern era? The answer is probably no. The analysis of both therapeutic and zealous listening and observation of hostesses' and volunteers' listening (which appears in the following chapters) reveal that listeners tend to reproduce their original positions by deploying their listening skills.

In summary, authors of self-help guides compliment women's ways of listening as expressive, caring and patient, while they criticise men's listening behaviour as inexpressive and being advice-givers. The authors often introduce stories of the women or hostesses they have met as being good listeners, but there are almost no examples of good male listeners. Traditionally, it seems that listening is used to connote femininity due to the fact that women were trained to be quiet, passive and modest listeners. In addition, the authors often criticise how seniors or authoritative figures monopolise speaking, and subordinates or juniors tend to listen to them. This discloses that listening connotes inferiority too. These two aspects – gender and hierarchy – reflect a conventional image of listening and speaking: feminine and inferior listening and masculine and superior speaking. Instead of the powerless image of listening, the authors suggest a new image: powerful and functional, or even masculine, listening. They use three strategies, such as inserting powerful words or phrases, linking listening to speaking and teaching the advantage of a receiver's/addressee's position. Therefore, listening in self-help literature shows contrastive values. Moreover, although the authors praise women as good listeners, this does not mean that they gain power through listening, because their listening skills eventually ensure that listeners stay in their original positions.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analysed self-help literature and training courses on listening. Firstly, the analysis has revealed the ideal listener: a person who listens attentively, expressively and empathetically. This listener also skilfully uses two different types of listening mode: therapeutic and what I call zealous listening. Therapeutic listening is used when the listener is in power and functions as a mask for silent authority. Conversely, zealous listening is advised to be used when the listener is in a subordinate position and works as an interactional weapon of the weak. These two listening types suggest that a listener stays in her/his current position and reproduces the

existing hierarchy. Thus, not to challenge the current hierarchy is tacitly consented to by listeners in interactions in Japan.

Moreover, the analysis of self-help literature has disclosed the conventional image of listening: femininity and inferiority. Although the authors attempt to change this image and promote a new value, that listening is powerful and functional, the image remains because they praise women as being good listeners, as well as teaching a type of listening to be used when a listener is in a subdominant position.

Now, we have understood the nature of the proficient listener and their skills in theory. But how do therapeutic and zealous listening work in reality? How do experienced listeners use both types of listening? Is being attentive, expressive and empathetic, as well as recognising the hierarchy in interaction, enough to be a good listener? In the next chapters, I compare the normative skills set out in self-help literature with my ethnographic findings on experienced listeners, such as hostesses and AL volunteers.

Chapter 3. Listening as a streetwise skill for hostesses

In a high-end night club, hostesses entertain male customers through having fun conversations and a lot of alcohol. They enliven a conversation, titillate their customers' masculinity and manage or even play with power balance and intimacy with customers by often staying in a listener's position. Their communication skills eventually earn customers' favour, trust and large amounts of money. Therefore, a hostess's listening skill is a vital element of being 'streetwise'. How, then, do they listen to customers? What kind of listening strategies do they use to have a lively conversation or to stimulate customers' maleness? In this chapter, I analyse ways in which hostesses deploy listening and discuss how hierarchy and gender influence interactions in a hostess club.

3.1 Entering the hostess world

About 8 pm in Ginza, Tokyo, beautifully dressed-up women walk at a brisk pace to their night clubs. They are called 'hostesses', are often described as 'night butterflies', and are praised as communication professionals. What kind of communication do they offer?

Hostesses' services mainly (but not only) involve serving alcohol and providing pleasurable conversation in a hostess club for their predominantly male customers. They fall into the legal category of those who are 'working at a cabaret club, night club, bar or any other similar facility which provides a floor for customers to dance or serves customers and provides them with entertainment or foods and drinks' (Income Tax Act of Japan Article 204 (6)). Their service is defined as entertainment by the way it generates a pleasurable and lively atmosphere (*kanraku teki na fun'iki*), which though worded vaguely, sets limits such as not offering physical or sexual services (Law on Control and Improvement of amusement business, Article 2 (3)). Therefore, their business differs from other types of night-life entertainment such as *sōpu* ('soap girls' who soap up customers and perform sexual acts) or *pinsaro* ('pink salon', women who assist masturbation).

The origin of a hostess is said to be waitresses in cafes who eventually became responsible for attracting customers during the Meiji to early Shōwa period. Their role was finally established when the number of hostess clubs expanded during the post-war economic growth of the late 1960s. Most large companies set up expense accounts for entertaining employees and clients to enhance

business relationships and one of the choices is/was going to hostess clubs (Allison 1994:8; Gagné 2010; Hōjō 2014; Kurashina 2008; Matsuda 2008).

The level of service, décor, types of drinks and snacks, use of language, prices, and even the attire of hostesses can vary dramatically in different types of clubs, lounges or bars and in different areas. Clubs in Ginza, Tokyo rank highly in terms of service and price, and the hostesses in Ginza clubs are especially famed for being good listeners[vi]. Authors or self-help books on hostesses' communication often say that beautiful appearances are never sufficient to get customers to keep returning to a hostess club, but that good conversation is also needed (Kotarou 2007:1; Mukaidani 2000:40). How then do they communicate with their customers? What makes them good listeners? To answer these questions, I worked as a hostess in a hostess club in Ginza. My story of job-hunting to become a hostess is in itself revealing of how these clubs work, therefore, I will start with that experience.

3.1.1 A long journey to find a job

While I was in Cambridge, I asked my close male Japanese friend Maro-san[vii] (32 years old), who was currently working in Japan, whether he knew someone related to hostess work (11.1.2017). He asked one of his colleagues who happened to know an entrepreneur called Minako, a woman in her 40s, who for more than 10 years worked as a hostess. Minako understood what I was aiming for and asked me to send photographs of myself. After a few days, she sent Maro-san the following message;

Regarding a hostess job in Ginza: the pictures I received were great. She is a nice woman♡ She passed (my criteria) ♡ She said that she does not require payment, but hostess work is very hard. I would recommend her to work and to experience it by herself/her body rather than just

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[vi] As I mentioned in earlier chapters, hostess themselves publish self-help books pertaining to communication skills including listening techniques (Hidaka 2013; Mizuki 2015; Mochizuki 2009), and also those who learn communication skills from hostesses publish self-help guides on communication and listening (Kotarou 2007; Mukaidani 2000; Nanba 2015). Furthermore, many authors of self-help literature refer to hostesses as good listeners.

[vii] In the following section, I will refer to hostesses and members of staff without their honorific titles and customers with honorific titles such as ...-*san* (Mr), ...-*sensei* (an honorific way of saying Mr, Dr and Prof.) and ...-*kaichō* (executive) in order to avoid confusion.

interviewing hostesses. Therefore, I will ask clubs to pay her. I used to work as a hostess for 10 years before marrying. After that, I divorced and started my own business. I really hope that she sees and understands the endeavours of hostesses, and how customers become happy due to hostesses' efforts. It's just listening, no more, no less, and being paid for time and communication (Jikan o uru shigoto toha kiku koto igai no nanimono demo nai). (My translation 27.01.2017)

Two months later, I went to Japan for short-term fieldwork to negotiate with Minako about a hostess's job. On 4 April 2017, Minako set up a meeting to introduce me to a playwright, Katakura-sensei, a man in his 60s who often goes to clubs in Ginza. Katakura-sensei has published many famous hostesses' stories and has directed plays and films related to hostess work. Although he is just a customer of clubs in Ginza, it is common to use customers' connections to work in a club in Ginza or to move from one club to another. Usually, customers who introduce popular and experienced hostesses to other clubs can get appreciation money back from clubs, (though not in my situation as a novice). In other cases, women can apply to clubs through connections with hostesses or staff members, or employment agencies. Some hostesses are recruited on the streets by a so-called scout man.

I met Minako and Katakura-sensei at a retro-European style café in Ginza at five pm. I was quite nervous, so Maro-san came with me and helped me to calm down. Katakura-sensei and Minako appeared at our table. The first thing Katakura-sensei said was: 'Oh...that kind of a face' (*ah, kōyū kao ne*), and then explained that he came expressly to see my face. As he knew that I was a student from the UK studying communication, he commented that just having good conversation skills cannot make you a top hostess, and that a beautiful face and charm (*aikyou*) are also important. (However later, when I met him at a club, he expressed the opposite opinion twice.) He also told me that clubs in Ginza and Roppongi are quite different, and complained that these days many clubs in Ginza are becoming like *kyabakura* (cabaret clubs) in Roppongi. He said to me, 'You can ask me anything about hostess clubs, any questions?' I explained I had read his books on hostesses in Ginza and praised how these were helpful to understand Ginza clubs' systems. He seemed to be very happy to hear my comment and mentioned how Minako had potential to be a 'Mama' (a representative hostess of a whole club, either an owner or an employed manager). I asked why he thought Minako was such a promising hostess, and he answered, 'Because she is very *omizu-ppoi'* (she looks very much like a woman working in the night

entertainment business). Minako said '*Ehe*?' with her sweet voice, inclining her head to Katakura-sensei. Her reply was the typical sweet behaviour hostesses show. Katakura-sensei said, 'See? Like that.' After 15 minutes' talk, he concluded, 'Ok, I can introduce you to a famous former *kurofuku* (a concierge working in hostess clubs, the term literally means black tie). He will help you to find a job. Well, you might become a top hostess because you are really humble (*koshi ga hikui*). What if you became a No.1 hostess?!' and he laughed. At this point, a tall hostess came to our table to see Katakura-sensei and go for *dōhan* (or also called *dōhan shukkin*: having dinner with a client before going to a club). Our meeting ended.

Four months later, in August, I went back to Tokyo for short-term fieldwork interviewing occupational listeners again, and in order to have another meeting to find work as a hostess. On 22 August, Maro-san and I went to meet Minako and Ogasawara-san, a man in his 70s who used to work as a concierge in hostess clubs, and who also owned several hostess clubs during the bubble economy. He lost every club after the collapse of the bubble, and had also lost people's trust due to his arrogant character. Ogasawara-san is a short man with an ever-present smile, and initially seemed to be a kind person. (Possibly because I asked him to sign the book containing his life story.) He said, 'What hostesses do in clubs in Ginza is "*kaigo*" (caring/nursing)'. Retrospectively, through my experiences of working as a hostess, '*kaigo*' is an apt keyword, as hostesses perform not only the role of a sexy girl but also that of a benevolent caregiver. Ogasawara-san talked about his past proudly and mentioned how recently he dealt with *yakuza*. After 30 minutes, he had to go to visit some clubs to see his friends and decided to take me there as he thought it could be a good opportunity for me to see different clubs.

He eventually went to see two customers and took me to three different clubs. The first club was small and had a feminine atmosphere due to the floral patterns on the furniture. The second club was middle size, with a black colour scheme and very dark. The third club was middle size, with a simple design, decorated in shades of brown. I was surprised that each club had such different styles. In the end, Ogasawara-san told me that he would organise a hostess job for me when I returned to Tokyo next time. The long night finally ended.

At the beginning of January, I started my four months' fieldwork. Ogasawara-san and I were supposed to meet on 10 January. However, somehow my eyes had become very swollen, and therefore, I asked him to postpone the meeting. This became one of the reasons that made him angry with me later.

On 12 January, Ogasawara-san phoned and suggested that I to come to watch an Internet TV shoot in a hostess club that he was helping. I agreed to the visit. He also said, 'You won't be useful for my future. You just want to work as a hostess for three months, which won't bring any benefits to me.' By 'benefit' he meant money and fame for him. He started becoming unkind to me, as I often saw him becoming arrogant to other subordinate people.

On the 17th, I visited a relatively large hostess club in Ginza. I greeted Ogasawara-san and quietly watched the first half of the shoot, after which Ogasawara-san asked me to participate in the second half. He wanted to create an impression to audiences that hostess clubs represent Japanese '*omotenashi*' (Japanese ways of hospitality) and are appreciated even by people from overseas. I introduced myself as a student at the University of Cambridge who was going to work as a hostess to understand Japanese *omotenashi*. After the shoot, the participants exchanged their name cards and then went to an *udon* noodle restaurant. After dinner, Ogasawara-san told me he was going to take me to an established Ginza hostess club called Hoshi, (which he helped to set up), to look for a hostess job. However, after a few minutes' walk, Ogasawara-san said, 'You must have been nervous and tired, right?' I smiled and answered, 'Yes, a little bit nervous and tired.' Ogasawara-san said, 'Ok, you go home, you must be tired. Have a rest.' I was confused about his attitude. I wanted to start working as a hostess as soon as possible, however, I had no choice but to go home.

A few days later on the 19th, I got a phone call from Ogasawara-san. Because my phone had a sound problem, I could not hear what he said, and it took five minutes to call him back. He was furious at me, scolding: 'How dare you waste my time! You cancelled the first meeting as well! The other day at the Internet TV shoot, I wanted to talk with you as soon as possible, but you were always lost in the crowd. I got frustrated! It seems that you are scared (*bibitteru*) of working as a hostess, so I have changed my mind. I was supposed to introduce you to the club Hoshi, but I'm going to take you to another club. It is smaller, so you might be able to work better with fewer people!' After his lecture, he gave me the phone number of a concierge called Tani in Club Mizuno. Tani used to work under Ogasawara-san's management (however, he quit soon because of Ogasawara's arrogant attitude). I phoned Tani straightway, and he said that we could have an interview at the club that night at 8. I said yes.

That same day, I arrived at Ginza station at about 8 pm. I met Tani, who turned out to be a senior concierge in his 60s. I was asked to sit in a semi-private space in the main room of Club

Mizuno. He asked me several questions such as 'have you worked as a hostess before?' and 'how long can you work?' I answered these questions honestly. I knew that I was not able to work as a hostess more than three to four months due to my PhD schedule, so I said, 'I can work at least three months'. In advance, Minako, Katakura-sensei and Ogasawara-san had advised me not to say that I would work just for three months because clubs do not hire hostesses who work for a short period[viii]. Tani also asked me if it is ok to say to customers that I was a PhD student at the University of Cambridge. Due to the ethical issue for my fieldwork, I wanted to be open about my position as a researcher. I knew that it would be impossible to obtain consent forms from members of staff, hostess and customers. Therefore, I said yes. Tani seemed to be very happy with this. Later, I understood why he wanted me to reveal that I was a student from Cambridge. To become a popular hostess quickly, a beautiful appearance is not enough, and it can even be useless. One needs to have distinctive or unique characteristics to be remembered by customers. Tani wanted to use 'a current student at the University of Cambridge' label to attract and entertain customers, which in fact he did. Tani gave me a piece of paper to write down my personal information and bank account. After 10 minutes' conversation, I was finally hired by Club Mizuno.

In hindsight, I perhaps took a long detour to get a hostess job and could have found a job in easier ways. However, I am sure that without these people's support and connections, the way members of staff in the club dealt with me would have been hugely different. This long journey also eventually brought customers to me. Additionally, I was able to understand how people in different positions – such as a former hostess, experienced customers and former *kurofuku* etc. – think about hostesses and clubs differently.

3.1.2 Club Mizuno and colleagues

Club Mizuno is located in a large building famous for hostess clubs, but is relatively small compared to others in Ginza (Figure 4). The club has a chic and elegant atmosphere with a conservative colour palette, save for its large flower bouquets. It is not a lavish, bright kind of club with a feminine atmosphere. The club has only one rectangular main room with an entrance hall and a cloakroom area. There is also a small locker room for hostesses with an accountant's desk, a small waiting (standing) space for hostesses with customers' reserved bottles (called a 'keep

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[viii] In reality, many novices quit their job within a few weeks or months.

bottle') between the entrance and the main room, a small kitchen before the main room, and two toilets to the back. There are long chic brown-coloured seats and small black marble tables along the right and left sides of the longer walls. To the back, there are semi-private spaces with seats and tables, each of which can accommodate a maximum of 8 people, including customers and hostesses. The club itself can accommodate a maximum of 50 people in total. The lighting is fairly dark, and three Galle chandeliers hang from the ceiling. Four small lamps and two huge flower bouquets are situated in the middle of the room by the backrests of the long seats. The entire room is carpeted in deep red. Copies of famous drawings by the likes of Klimt, Chagall and Mucha are displayed on the walls in the main room, as well as a large mirror. Several small mirrors hang at the entrance. Two humidifiers are discreetly set in the main room. Jazz music plays constantly at a low volume (Figure 5 and 6).

There are six people who work at Club Mizuno every night of the week (clubs in Ginza are usually closed on weekends). Sayuri-mama is the owner-cum-hostess at Club Mizuno. Yamamoto, a concierge in his late 30s is the club manager. There used to be another younger concierge in his early 30s, but he quit while I was working. Tani is the concierge/senior manager and educator of the hostesses, and always wears a business suit. *Chief* is the male chef in charge of drink and food in his 40s, and wears a sommelier uniform. *Kaiki no onē*-san, a female accountant in her late 60s, wears casual clothes. Kikuta is a female employee in her early 30s who works mainly in the cloakroom area, and wears a black suit.
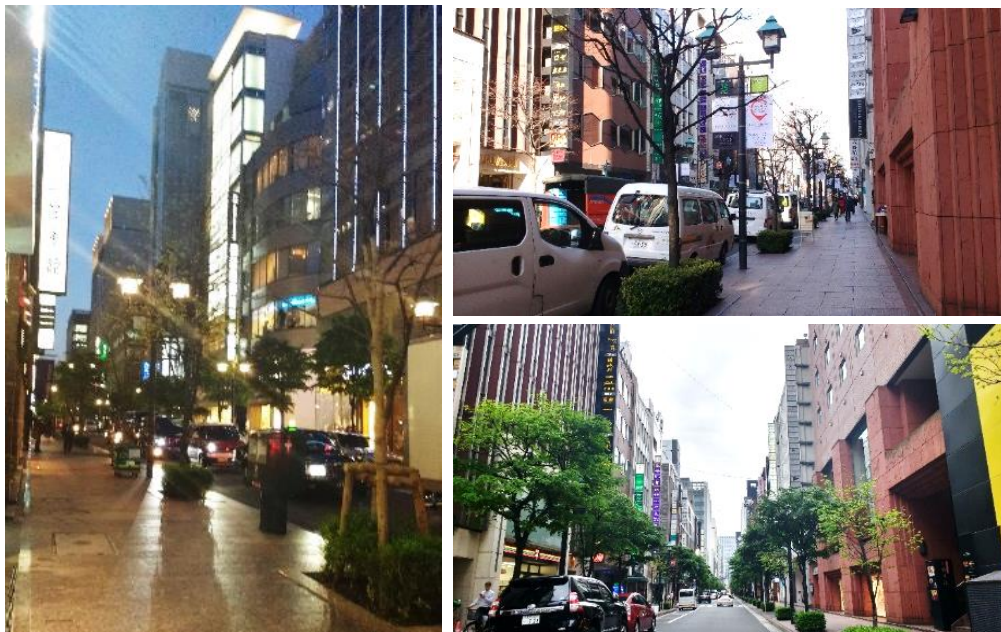
Figure 4: Ginza club area at night time and day time
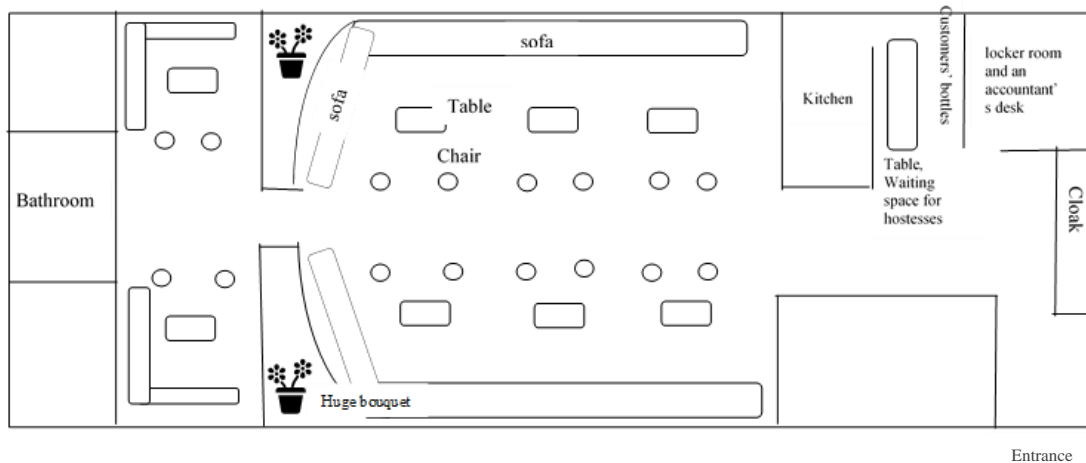
Figure 5: Club Mizuno inside

Figure 6: Inside Club Mizuno

'Mama' literally means mother. A mama is a hostess who is responsible for the whole club. She would be either an owner-mama or an employed-mama. Mamas used to work as *help* hostesses and gained their own customers, then become *uriage* hostesses. '*Uriage* hostesses' (sales hostesses) are those who have a number of customers and work on commission. They work as self-employed, borrowing a club's space for their business and being obliged to gain a certain profit and to clear a *dōhan* quota; and *'help* hostesses' are those who work as part-time hostesses with daily salary, as I did. They also have their own customers and are normally obliged to clear their profit or *dōhan* quota. Usually, hostesses start working as *help* hostesses and then become *uriage* hostesses. Finally, some *uriage* hostesses become Mamas.

Customers can choose only one hostess as a '*tantō* hostess' (the other name '*kakari*'or '*eikyū shimei*') in each club, and this hostess is in charge of the customers' service, communication inside and outside the club and their payments. (Some customers do not choose *tantō* hostesses.) The

tantō-hostess system is permanent and effective. For example, if a hostess had *dōhan* with another hostesses' customer, she can clear her *dōhan* quota, but the profit (customers' payments) goes to the *tantō* hostess. Guests of *tantō* hostesses' customers also 'belong' to the *tantō* hostess too. When a *tantō* hostess is away from work one day but her customers came to the club, their profits, again, go to the *tantō* hostess. There are only a few opportunities for hostesses to gain their own customers: when they meet a customer who is completely new to a club and bring him to a club*;* when a *tantō* hostess quits her hostess work and her customers favour you, therefore agreeing to become your customer; when a *tantō* hostess changes a club so you ask her customers to be your customer in the current club; when you change a club and bring customers who favour you as your own customers; or a Mama recommends her customer to become a certain hostess' *tantō*. Therefore, hostesses wait for the right opportunity and time to arrive. The longer a hostess works, the more customers she has. A *tantō* hostess wisely uses *help* hostesses to gain profits, such as making the latter go for *dōhan* or *aftā* (drinking and eating outside of a club after the club has closed), while at the same time taking care of *help* hostesses by giving a chance to clear *dōhan* quotas, or giving new or second-hand dresses or accessories.

Male concierges are called '*kurofuku*' (black tie) because they wear a black coloured tuxedo or black or navy coloured suit. They support table services in ways such as bringing fruit that has been ordered, or other food, pouring wine or champagne, bringing hot towels, taking rubbish from a table, changing dirty ashtrays, allocating hostesses, bringing the bill and listening to customers. Backstage, they also perform admin work such as managing hostesses' working schedules, hiring hostesses, informing the *tsuke* (customers' unpaid bills) amount to *uriage* hostesses, listening to hostesses' complaints, filing customers' business cards and other information, sending thank you letters and gifts to customers, cleaning rooms, ordering flowers and other food and materials and creating customers' name tags for keep bottles etc. They must also remember the names of all customers and hostesses. Once I asked Yamamoto how he could remember customers' and hostesses' names although he was not involved in their conversations. Yamamoto told me, 'I eavesdrop and observe conversations, and later I make notes on that as well as on customers' appearance, for example, if they have a big belly or thin hair.' In Yamamoto's case, he also works as a kind of manager for Sayuri-mama. He always arrives at the club about 3 pm, then cleans inside and prepares to open the club.

Senior or manager class *kurofuku* such as Tani have worked in several clubs, therefore they have close relationships with many customers. When a senior *kurofuku* changes club, his customers visit his new club for him, and if they like the new club or find a favourite hostess, they will become regular customers. These experienced *kurofuku* often sit with their customers at a table, converse with them, mediate between customers and hostesses and even go to *aftā*. Tani calls himself '*taiko-mochi*', literally means those who have drums. Sayuri-mama calls him '*otoko geisha*' (male *geisha*). These names, including '*hōkan*' or '*tayūshū*', can be found since the Edo period, meaning a male entertainer who *moriageru* (entertain) or *kigen o toru* (putting one into a good mood) by his own efforts or by mediating authorities and entertainers/*geisha*/hostesses. Larger hostess clubs usually hire a male employee called '*sukauto*', who scouts girls on the street for employing as hostesses, but not Club Mizuno.

Kikuta – a female employee in her 30s – works in the cloakroom. Although her primary role is to manage customers' coats and bags, as a multi-talented person she supports hostesses, concierges, kitchen staff and the accountant. She is a professional of '*kizukai*' (being meticulous about others, and giving something to someone ahead of receiving requests), but she completely holds back and keeps a low profile, compared to hostesses. Therefore, although she was pregnant while I was working, apart from Sayuri-mama and me, no one realised it until her pregnancy became quite obvious.

Chief (a nickname) is in charge of preparing drink and food and sometimes helps concierges' work too, bringing missing items, and listening to customers.

Each night there are always 6 to 10 hostesses on duty. At the time that I was working at Club Mizuno, there were about 20 hostesses employed in total. By contrast, at bigger clubs, there might be 30 to 60 hostesses working every day. The range of hostesses' age in Ginza varies in each club. At Club Mizuno, the average age of the hostesses was about 34, which is relatively old compared to other clubs. Other clubs hire many hostesses in their early 20s and they will become Mamas in Ginza in the future. All hostesses and members of staff in Club Mizuno start working through connections with people in the club. When I asked some of them, 'Why did you choose this club?', everyone said it was because of '*en'* (fate) or 'my friend introduced me to Club Mizuno'. And I would also say the same answer '*en*', if I were to be asked the same question. The word *en* can mean 'luck' in this business, which is strongly desired as a hostess.

Hostesses' official working hours are from 8 pm to 12 pm, however, in reality, it is always longer. They need time to prepare before work, for example going to a hair salon and having make-up done. When they had *dōhan* or *aftā*, working hours would be much longer e.g. from 6 pm for *dōhan* and until 3 or 4 am for *aftā*. For example, one day I started preparing at 4.30 pm, went for *dōhan* at 6.00, worked in the club till 12.00, then went for *aftā* and finally returned to my accommodation at 4.30 am. In effect, I worked for 12 hours, from 4.30 pm to 4.30 am, and was continuously drinking for 9 hours.

Prices in Ginza clubs are expensive. Usually, customers order a bottle of whisky or brandy to be kept in a club; a system to encourage customers to return to the club. In this system, customers have to pay expensive bills at the beginning, but from the second visit, they pay less. For instance, in the case of Club Mizuno, one 'set' for 90 minutes – comprising one bottle of whisky and snacks for one person – would normally be about 90,000 yen (620 pounds[ix]), including table charge, operation charge (called *ōru* charge), concierge charge (called boy charge), service charge and taxes. In total, more than a third of the bill comes from service types of charge. The number of hostesses who sit together at a table does not influence the price. For three guests, the bill would be about 150,000 yen (1000 pounds). After 'keeping' a bottle, one set for one person with small snacks would be about 50,000 yen (350 pounds) and for three customers, the cost would be about 100,000 yen (700 pounds). After the first set, a time charge would be added. Ordering further bottles of wine, champagne, sparkling wine or *nihonshu* (Japanese sake) costs a lot, and having a glass of beer or tequila would be charged per glass. Therefore, hostesses try to ask customers to order these extra bottles or glasses to gain additional profits. The truth is not only that a bottle of alcohol is irrationally expensive, but also the different types of 'mysterious' charges are truly expensive. From the perspective of owners or managers, rent of space in Ginza, especially 7 or 8 *chōme* (the district famous for exclusive entertainments) where I worked is extremely expensive. Therefore high bills are necessary, both to provide the space for the club and to keep talented hostesses.

In terms of the financial situation and popularity of the club when I was working there, Club Mizuno was in a difficult period, compared to a year ago. Towards the end of my working contract, I came to understand that Club Mizuno used to be more popular. However, because two *uriage* hostesses had moved to other clubs, the club had lost quite a lot of regular customers. Consequently,

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[ix] 1 pound was roughly 150 yen in 2018.

although there were *uriage* hostesses, *help* hostesses were the majority. There was a less competitive atmosphere among hostesses. The No1 title (a title for a hostess making the most profit for the club except the Mama) was always bestowed on the same hostess: Kyōko, a woman in her late 30s. Another reason for the financial difficulty was the season I worked. '*Nippachi*' (an abbreviation of '*nigatsu*' (February) and '*hachigatsu*' (August)) is when the Japanese economy is slower and there are fewer customers in the field of service industries. I worked from the mid of January to the end of April, therefore the period might have been influenced by the general Japanese economy[x]. In a wider view, most large companies limit or no longer provide '*settai hi*' (expenses for entertaining clients) or '*kōsai hi*' (expenses for socialising) for their employees. Therefore, the number of businessmen from large companies coming to Ginza clubs has been declining. For other individuals, it is too expensive to go to Ginza clubs frequently at one's own expense. Therefore, the majority of customers are people who run their own company or who are employed as executive officers by middle or large-size companies. For the elder salarymen/businessmen's generation, the phrase, 'I have finally become a person who can afford to drink in Ginza (clubs)', has a nostalgic meaning. However, seniors do not take younger generations to Ginza clubs anymore. Therefore, businessmen now no longer aspire to drink in clubs in Ginza, although they would say they want to experience Ginza clubs culture if they had a chance. In reality, the demand for Ginza clubs is declining in general. A few clubs in Ginza are still packed with customers every night, but this was not the case for Club Mizuno.

3.1.3 My first day of work: learn everything by yourself

I was supposed to start working on 22 January. However, it was snowing heavily in Tokyo, and cars or taxies could not enter Ginza 7 and 8 *chōme* where there are many hostess clubs. Therefore, Tani called me to say that the club would not open that day, so I should come the following day. In addition, he said: 'As a hostess, the most important thing is your appearance. After that, the next is to be relaxed. Do not worry about your mistakes. You will learn how to deal with different customers as time goes by. Maybe you'll need a month to learn it.'

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[x] Mochizuki Akemi, a Mama of four clubs, explains the busiest month is December and the second is March as customers often have celebrations for promotion and send-off parties for those who will be transferred overseas (Yahoo! Japan News online, accessed June 2020). Therefore, a lack of customers in Club Mizuno probably cannot be attributed to the season only.

The next day, I went to the club, bringing along high heels and a few accessories that Tani had advised. First, he took me to a rental dress shop close to Club Mizuno and left me there alone. I had to choose a dress by myself without any knowledge. I tried 3 or 4 dresses, but only one pink dress fitted well. Although I thought the dress was a bit too young, I ended up wearing it. It was 2000 yen (14 pounds). Hostesses pay any expenses related to their work by themselves. After that, Tani took me to a hair salon and left me alone again. Every hostess must go to a hair salon to set their hair before going to work. Although I did not like the hairstyle I got, having no knowledge or time I had to go with that. Hair set-up at this salon is usually 2000 yen, but I had a coupon this time, so it was just 1000 yen (7 pounds). I went back to the club at 8.00. Tani was supposed to teach me how to make and serve '*mizuwari*' (whisky with either water or sparkling water and ice), however unusually customers arrived at this time, and so Tani took me to a café to talk instead.

In the café, Tani taught me the Mama's name, the No1 hostess's name and the names of the other main hostesses. But he also confessed that he could not remember everyone's name. He also explained how to make *mizuwari*. To be honest, I did not really understand, but tried to imagine it as best as I could. He asked me what kind of *genji-na/genji-mei* (a name as a hostess or host) I would like to have. I was afraid that I would not recognise my *genji-na* when called by someone, so suggested using my real name, Nanase. Tani explained that 'There is a hostess called 'Nana' so it might be a bit too similar.... but maybe it's ok. But are you sure about it?' He smiled and then added, 'because there is a superstition that you cannot '*agaru'* (leave or graduate) from Ginza if you use your real name as your *genji-na.*' I laughed and said it was ok with me. He gave me a blank business card printed with the club's name and address on the reverse and asked me to write my full name down. This would act as a temporary name card I should use in the club[xi]. Again Tani assured me that I would learn everything at a table with customers and would get used to working with different customers, so not to worry about mistakes. This was the sum total of what I was taught before beginning work as a hostess. In other words, he psychologically supported me, but taught me nothing practical. Looking back now at my hostess experience, I understand why he did not teach me anything specific. Apart from basic tasks – i.e. making drinks or tidying up a table – every hostess has their own appeal, such as appearance, their hobbies, dreams or former

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[xi] *Genji-na* should be a full name. When hostesses send *oseibo*/*ochūgen* (a seasonal gift), Valentine's chocolates and *nengajō* (new years' cards), signing only a first name makes it clear that gifts or cards are sent by hostesses. In order to conceal this, hostesses usually use a full *genji-na*.

work experiences. Working with these individual attributes, they communicate with customers. In other words: I had to find my strong or unique selling point myself.

We went back to the club. Tani's customer Onodera-san was already there drinking with the other hostesses. Tani took me straight to Onodera-san's seat and introduced me to him as a new hostess. Onodera-san, a man in his 60s, owns his own company related to the construction industry, temp agency business and sweet wholesaling. He was tall, and wore glasses and a grey suit. He spoke in a low tone of voice with a mixture of honorific and casual language, and smiled gently from time to time. He was a gentleman. He came to Club Mizuno for the first time to see Tani as the latter started working at the club recently. I sat on his left side. In front of him, Akane, a hostess in her 40s, was serving him *mizuwari*. Onodera-san said that Akane was beautiful, but in a kind of old-fashioned way. She laughed. Tani sat down next to her and in front of me, saying 'How are you?' and explained why the previous club he worked had closed. Onodera-san talked about his new sweet business. After that, Tani introduced me to him and mentioned I was a student at the University of Cambridge. Onodera-san asked me why I was working as a hostess and I explained I was researching listening and wanted to learn how hostesses listen to customers. Our conversation went to global business and globalisation, which often occurred when I sat with customers. Onodera-san expressed his opinion on Japanese business and its globalisation. Akane, Tani and I listened to him. It seemed that Onodera-san especially expressed his opinion to me as a person from the UK. The character and experience of the listener must affect both the subject of the conversation and how speakers talk.

In the middle of the conversation, the owner Mama came to our table in order to greet the new customer as she always does. This was the first chance for me to see Sayuri-mama. She is 42 years old and started Club Mizuno three years ago (Club Mizuno celebrated the fourth anniversary of the club in June 2018, however, the club was closed in May 2019). She always wears a Japanese traditional dress, a *kimono*. Her kimono is usually quite conservative in colour, such as grey or brown, and bears a subtle design, unlike other clubs' Mamas. Nevertheless, her kimono seems to be a very expensive quality. She is maybe about 160 cm tall, an average height for a Japanese woman. However, because of her Ginza hairstyle (a style that raises fringe and hair of the crown of the head very high), she looks taller. She does not wear thick makeup, has pale skin and is naturally beautiful. One of her old customers told me that Sayuri-mama used to be very tanned in her 20s because she spent much time playing golf with her customers. She drinks a lot, smiles

occasionally and has a dignified (*rin to shita*) atmosphere around her. Two other customers told me that Sayuri-mama is frank and has a very straightforward personality compared to other Mamas in Ginza, who are typically soft and feminine in their demeanour.

Sayuri-mama introduced herself to Onodera-san, presenting her business card while standing. Onodera-san stood up and also gave her his card and they chatted casually. Onodera-san asked Tani to bring a bottle of champagne, asking Sayuri-mama to make the choice. She whispered to Yamamoto (a concierge) to bring a bottle of champagne called 'Opus One' which cost 120,000 yen (about 830 pounds). Yamamoto brought the bottle and glasses and poured for everyone. We made a toast and Onodera-san said to me; 'My best wishes to you'. I saw several new customers order champagne or sparkling wine; this turns out to be the standard behaviour of an experienced customer who is new to a club.

At some point when all of us were talking together, Sayuri-mama quietly stood up and quickly moved to another table without a word, a move which was almost unnoticeable. Sayuri-mama usually moves from table to table and customer to customer, without offending or disturbing customers by leaving.

When Onodera-san decided to leave the club, Tani brought the bill and Onodera-san gave him his cash card. As customers leave, all the hostesses sitting at a table see them off outside the building until the customers are out of sight. When Onodera-san stood up, the hostesses either helped him into his coat at the cloakroom area or went to call for an elevator. Tani kept up a conversation with Onodera-san in the elevator.

Inside an elevator, 'elevator talk' often happens. The lighting is quite bright compared to club interiors, and space is very confined. Therefore, customers (most of them are drunk at this point) can reassess hostesses' appearances. It often happens that customers honestly comment on hostesses' appearances or tease them, saying for example 'Oh, I didn't realise how beautiful you are due to the darkness in the club', 'You really are quite small!' or 'Your breasts seem big, are you using padding?'. One day, one of the customers said, 'You guys really have faces like this?!' (*konna kao shiteta no ka kimitachi?!*). Sayuri-mama replied: 'Welcome to the real world'.

Arriving at the ground floor, hostesses say goodbye and bow deeply, until the departing customers are no longer visible. Mama and hostesses say, 'Thank you for the delicious drinks' (*gochisō sama deshita*) or 'Please take care on your way back'. Sayuri-mama sometimes says to drunk customers, 'Please get a hold of yourself' (*oki o tashikani*), which always makes hostesses

laugh as she is still teasing customers by using this antiquated expression. I worked during the winter season, and felt so cold standing outside in a dress. Some customers said, 'You must all be so cold, so get back to the club!' Onodera-san seemed to be on the way to other clubs, so left the building. We thanked him and bowed deeply.

Later that first night, I was seated at another customers' table, but I do not remember who it was. At 12.15, Tani allowed me to go home, saying 'Good job today and see you tomorrow'. I changed my shoes in the small locker room and grabbed my coat and bag. The elevator seemed to be busy with customers and hostesses either seeing off customers or going back home, therefore I used the stairs and put on my coat on the ground floor. I walked back home.

Arriving home, I felt very hungry and my mind was excited by the alcohol, new people and new rules I encountered. I had a small snack, took a quick bath and tried to sleep, but couldn't sleep well. This was my first day as a hostess.

3.1.4 Crafting myself as a hostess

A typical day as a hostess: At 6 pm I eat a *bentō* that I buy in my neighbourhood for dinner while I watch 'Friends' on Netflix. Although I meet various friends and my family in Tokyo frequently during my fieldwork, I feel quite lonely in my studio room in Tsukiji. This is caused by the gap between the dazzling club world – surrounded by happy, bright and noisy people – and a small and lonely studio room in Tsukiji, as well as by the gap between my quiet and peaceful PhD life in Cambridge and the Ginza life full of financial and social hierarchies and gender obstacles.

At half-past six, I put on make-up. Because the lighting in Club Mizuno is a bit dark, other hostesses had heavier make-up. Therefore, my makeup had become thicker after a week compared to my first day. However, sometime Tani honestly told me, 'Your face is still conservative!' (*jimi nan da yo na mada!*). Hostesses with a gorgeous appearance tend to be popular. This type of beauty stems from their beautifully decorated hairstyle, thick makeup, big smiles, cheerful voice, stylish dresses, tall height (so hostesses wear high heels) and confident behaviour.

I get a train from Tsukiji station to go to Ginza (two stops for 5 minutes) at quarter to 7. Then I walk to a rental-dress shop to choose my dress. Hostesses have to wear a variety of dresses and should not wear the same dress on consecutive days. There is a day called '*shinchōbi*' when hostesses must wear a new dress, usually once a month. Some clubs have a day to wear *kimono*.

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Black is considered sexy, but also relates to the image of death and funerals, therefore Club Mizuno restricts the number of hostesses who can wear a black dress to two a day. Dresses are one of the important items to make the atmosphere of the club lively. Hostesses' dresses reflect hostesses' feelings on the day, as well as affecting their performances 'on stage'.

After a month of work, I decided to buy several myself. It is because renting dresses can be expensive (from 1500 yen to 2500 yen each rental), it was time-consuming and it was difficult to find dresses that fitted me well. After buying my own dresses, I was able to reduce my preparation time, so my schedule became less hectic. On a normal day, I would leave my studio room at 7 pm.

At the beginning of my working period, I tried to look like a mature woman by my selection of dresses. However, Tani and Kikuta told me that my selection of dresses was a bit conservative for me, and it would better for me to wear flashier dresses or '*buriburi no doresu*' (a very cute and pretty type of dress) because of my short height and young appearance. Therefore, I bought these types, too. I was surprised to hear their suggestion because I had heard that customers in Ginza prefer mature and sexy women. This is still true, but in order to stand out from other hostesses, one needs to understand one's unique attributes (or even shortcomings) and then work with those to find one's strengths.

Arriving at Ginza by train, I go to a very small hair salon close to Club Mizuno and wait for my turn (usually 10 to 25 minutes due to the number of hostesses waiting). It is 2,000 yen (14 pounds) for one session. There is a book of 10 tickets for 18,000 yen which means 1,800 yen per session with this coupon. In the hair salon, many hostesses from other clubs are waiting. They are mostly either doing their make-up or looking at their smartphones while waiting. Some of them meet their colleagues and talk, or take phone calls from *kurofuku*. I overheard several conversations between hostesses and their hairdressers. There are always three or four hairdressers who are friendly and smiley. The hair setting takes about 5 to 10 minutes for each customer. Although hostesses and hairdressers converse only for this short time, because hostesses have to go to the hair salon every day they work, they meet many times a week. Therefore, their conversations are always friendly. I heard very honest comments from hostesses on their work such as: 'I always imagine how it would be wonderful if I could go home after setting my hair here, it is perfect, isn't it?' (*watashi ne, itsumo omou no, koko de kami setto shite moratte, kono mama ie ni kaeretaranātte, saikō janai?*), 'Ah, I do not want to work today...', 'I met a really annoying customer yesterday...' or 'I am not sure if I can clear my monthly quota this month...'. The hair salon must be one of the

rare places that hostesses can be honest about their negative feelings or tiredness, even if just for a short time.

As regards my hairstyle, I was struggling for a month to decide which kind of hairstyle suited me. I thought I should aim to look older and sexier because I am quite short (which makes me look childlike and young). It is said that customers in Ginza prefer hostesses with grown-up, sexy appearances. Customers, members of staff and hostesses in Club Mizuno started commenting on my hair. The problem was that everyone had different and even opposite opinions on my hairstyle; some said my style had become grown-up and it suited me, while others said it was better for me to have a softer and prettier type of hairstyle because there are only a few young hostesses in Club Mizuno. Therefore, for a month, every time I saw Ishida – my hairdresser – I asked her to figure out my hair problem. Ishida is in her late 30s, is tall and skinny, and constantly has a compassionate smile on her face. She cheers hostesses up with her sweet voice. I discussed my hair problems and other private issues with her while she was styling my hair. Finally, after a month, I understood that a hairstyle which made me feel confident would be the right one, and it would be influenced by my mood or my dress that day. Towards the end, my hairstyle became mostly settled but still sometimes changed slightly depending on my mood and clothes.

Concerning the colour of hair, it should be black or dark brown. It is very rare to see hostesses who dye their hair blond or light brown. Minako recalled when she had just started working as a hostess in Ginza, she had dyed her hair blond. On the first day of work, at a table with customers, the club Mama commented: 'You're coming with dyed blond hair? Are you underestimating Ginza clubs?' (*kinpatsu de kita no? ginza nameten no?*), which was quite harsh to say in front of customers. Indeed, not only hairstyles but also colours are important to make a certain impression e.g. neat, clean and sophisticated. Furthermore, hostesses in their late 30s to 50s dye their grey hair black. Blond, brown or grey hair is not appreciated.

On a typical day, after getting my hair done, I walk to the club. I arrive at just before 8 pm with this routine. There are three elevators in the building where I work. I do not like taking an elevator full of hostesses going to work, therefore I always use the stairs to reach the fifth floor where Club Mizuno is located. Before entering the club, hostesses have to take off their coats to respect customers who might come earlier, though that never happened while I was working. Hostesses say, 'Good morning' (*ohayō gozaimasu*) when they enter the club and staff reply in the same way, although it is about 8 pm.

First, hostesses enter the small locker room where only one or two people can stand at the same time and usually *kaikei no onē*-san is sitting in her chair with her desk and laptop. The hostesses hang their coats on a hanger rack and put shoes and bags into a very small locker with name tags or sometimes outside the locker if there is no space. But *kaikei no onē*-san often complains that this makes the space messy and narrow. After that the hostess stamps a timecard. *kaikei no onē*-san sometimes tells hostesses that they should get a stamp on their timecard when they are ready to work, not when they enter the locker room. Some hostesses change their clothes in this small room and do their make-up in front of a big mirror on the wall. Several small advertisement posters for things like hair salons or rental *kimono* and *kitsuke* (putting on kimono) shops are displayed, as well as a small monthly '*dōhan shukkin*' competition list. Hostesses are usually obliged to clear several *dōhan* quotas every month and the frequency differs depending on types of employment, the period of employment and hostesses' age and wage. When a hostess fulfils a *dōhan*, one square would be coloured on the list. According to my fellow hostesses, other clubs sometimes have a huge monthly *dōhan* competition list on the wall inside hostesses' locker room, while other clubs do not have it at all. It depends on the owner's management policy. This list is one of the criteria to evaluate hostesses' popularity: and some hostesses could be fired based on this result. The hostess with the highest number of *dōhan* receives an extra salary called 'the *dōhan* prize' (*dōhan shō*).

Figure 6: Dōhan list

After that, hostesses who did not go for *dōhan* wait for customers in the main room from 8 pm, sitting on the sofa. All hostesses bring a small bag with them while they work. It contains their own business cards, a smartphone, a pen and a few cosmetics.

While waiting, hostesses sometimes talk to each other, exchange information about hair salon or dress shops, comment on hairstyles, share private lives or check their smartphones. Some hostesses asked me 'Did you find something interesting and useful for your research?' 'How could working as a hostess turn into research?' 'Did you like studying ever since you were a child? That must be why you could go to the University of Cambridge?' or 'What do your parents do?' I was quite surprised that hostesses are comfortable about becoming closer as friends, and nurture senior-junior relationships and help each other a lot. Although there is a strong hierarchy among hostesses, at least some of them travelled to Okinawa or went for Tokyo *hato basu* tour (a famous Tokyo bus trip) together. I also went for drinks and dinner with them. This situation happens because the club is quite small and has fewer hostesses and customers. In addition, members of staff and hostesses seem to love Club Mizuno and Sayuri-mama. What I had been imagining about hostesses was that they would be competing with each other, bad-mouthing each other and forming cliques, an idea which had probably been planted by TV dramas and manga related to hostesses in my mind. None of these things seemed to happen in Club Mizuno. Several hostesses also told me that in huge and popular clubs, there were always so many hostesses and customers that it was difficult to have time to talk and to get to know each other, so hostesses simply did not care about other hostesses. However, another hostess told me that there were clique struggles for some hostesses, but she kind of enjoyed seeing these. Based on her fieldwork in hostess clubs, anthropologist Gagné Nana Okura (2010) also argues that intra-gender power dynamics and struggles are an important aspect to understand hostess clubs, and their relationships influence interactions with male customers. I do agree with the significance of hostesses relationships and hierarchies. However, during my fieldwork, I had opportunities to observe more about their interactional collaborations, rather than dissonance in relationships[xii].

When the first customers arrived, the concierges Yamamoto, Tani and Kikuta call out, 'Welcome to the club' (*irasshai mase*) in very clear voices. Hostesses sitting on the sofa can hear their voices, and stand up to welcome the first customers. All hostesses at once go to the waiting

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[xii] Club Mizuno's peaceful or indifferent dynamics among hostesses was probably the result of the fact that all hostesses and other members of staff respect and trust Sayuri-mama, unlike the clubs where Gangé (2010) worked. Moreover, senior and high-ranking hostesses tended either to become caring towards other lower-ranking hostesses or to be unconcerned about other hostesses. Additionally, the club was relatively a small size club, and except one, none of the younger or middle-ranking hostesses wished to become a professional and full-time hostess, therefore there was a less competitive atmosphere. Tani was worrying about this peaceful atmosphere as this might cause a lack of customers and financial difficulties.

area. Some of them will be called by the concierge or Sayuri-mama to sit with customers. This is a weird moment. When Sayuri-mama chose me, I felt I was trusted, which made me proud, while when the concierge chose me, I was reminded that we hostesses are commodities.

Which hostesses sit at which table is decided by Sayuri-mama, or by a *tantō* hostess or one of the concierges. Sayuri-mama and *tantō* hostesses sometimes tell the concierges in advance which hostess they want to arrange to sit with certain customers, or which hostess should not sit with particular customers. Hostesses sometimes stay at a table till the customers leave, or sometimes they are moved to another table to talk to different customers. Customers are allowed to say to their *tantō* hostess or concierge, 'Please do not let her sit at my table' (*ano ko mō seki ni tsukenai de*). This is akin to a yellow card for hostesses, and a warning about their *sekkyaku* (service and communication). In four months, I probably got one yellow card from a customer of Tani's (details are in Chapter 5).

Figure 7: Drinking champagne with Sayuri-mama

3.1.5 At a table: smile, drink and titillate

What do hostesses do when they are called to a table? The following episode is a typical example. At a quarter to 9, I was asked by Mika, a hostess in her mid-30s, to sit with her customer called Kida-sensei, a man in his 80s. Mika chose me and a middle-ranking hostess in her early 30s called Anna to join her, based on Kida-sensei's character and preferences. Additionally, a concierge asked another hostess to sit with us.

Kida-sensei is short and wears a sophisticated suit and black-framed glasses. He is a lawyer. He talks slowly with a soft voice and often smiles. Mika is maybe the No.2 hostess and one of the better listeners I observed at Club Mizuno. She is quite tall and slim, with a light complexion, and she always wears sexy and elegant dresses. She smiles constantly and talks very casually with customers in a high, happy and clear voice, the same one she uses in private.
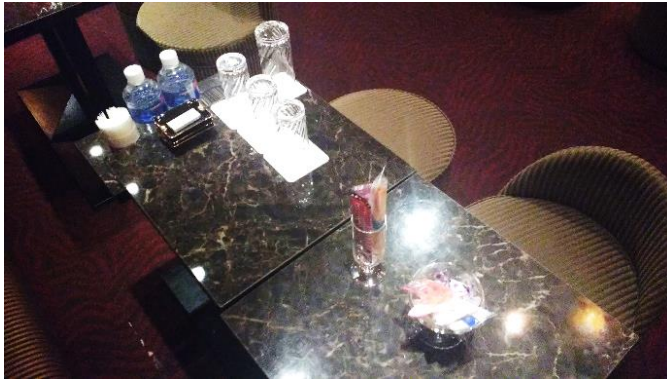
Figure 8: Usual table setting

Mika said, 'Long time no see!' with her big smile and was seated next to him. The other hostesses and I said, 'Welcome, may I sit with you' and introduced our names. Kida-sensei had visited Club Mizuno several times, so he keeps his bottle of whisky in the club. Anna started preparing drinks for him, asking: 'Would you like to drink whisky with water, soda or on the rocks?' Hostesses usually ask how a customer prefers their drink at the beginning e.g. *mizu-wari* (alcohol with water), *soda-wari* (alcohol with sparkling water) or *rock* (alcohol with ice only). She then prepared *mizu-wari* for Kida-sensei, and the same for the rest of us. On the table, several items are usually prepared before customers come; two bottles of water, paper napkins, two or three small ashtrays, a matchbox printed with the club's name, three smaller glasses called 'ladies' for hostesses on coasters, and a bigger glass for a customer on a coaster, as well as small snacks. Some regular customers have their own ashtrays or glasses. Customers' name tags hang at the neck of all keep bottles with a chain. When customers arrive, a concierge brings a small silver container full of ice, a tong and a mixing stick. The hostess who sits in front of the ice container and glasses mainly makes the drinks, but other hostesses help her too. When customers order a glass of beer, wine or sparkling wine, concierges prepare and pour these. During a conversation, hostesses have to top up alcohol before customers completely finish their drinks and wipe drops from both customers' and other hostesses' glasses using the white paper napkins on the table. In this way, customers can avoid getting their hands wet and hostesses can see clearly how much customers have drunk.

Deciding who is in charge of making drinks is quite random. There are no strict rules that lower-ranking hostesses have to sit in the position of making drinks, but it is more likely that they

will fulfil this role. Sayuri-mama never sits in this position. Who sits in the drink making position is also a matter of timing. Hostesses move from table to table, as does Sayuri-mama, and therefore there are no clear rules. Akane is a higher ranking hostess in her 40s, but she prefers this position and enjoys it. She is good at conversing while she is making drinks. For a novice hostess, making drinks at the same time as conversing with customers is a challenge.

While Anna was making drinks, Mika asked Kida-sensei, 'What did you eat for dinner today?' and a casual conversation begins. Asking about dinner is a typical way to start a conversation with a customer (Matsuda 2006:101). Anna distributed glasses to everyone and we raised them to Kida-sensei. Toasting is a ritual way for hostesses to join a conversation properly, and for customers, it is the indication that they allow hostesses to join a conversation, as well as to show their higher ranking over hostesses. Therefore, this ritual formally reflects the presence of the hierarchy between hostesses and customers. All the hostesses held their glasses with both hands and raised the glasses to Kida-sensei, saying 'Thank you for sharing your drinks and bon appétit' or 'Thank you for letting me join you' (*goissho sasete itadakimasu*). The hostesses' glasses touched the lower part of Kida-sensei's glass. Kida-sensei held his glass in his right hand and raised it.

After very casual chatting, Mika introduced me to Kida-sensei formally, 'Nanase is currently a student at the University of Cambridge! She is observing us for her research!! Don't you think that's interesting?!' She laughed. Kida-sensei made a very funny face to show his surprise, which made all the hostesses laugh a lot. Mika said, 'I have never seen you make a face like that!' and Kida-sensei also laughed. He asked me why I was working as a hostess and I told him briefly about my background and current research. He talked about a Chinese girl who studied at Harvard and is now working in Japan, and said I was like her. Our conversation naturally turned to the different club cultures in Ginza and Roppongi. We also talked about *hanabira sankaiten* (literally 'petals turn three times'; meaning: a fellatio service offered by three women) which is '*shimoneta*' (sexual talk), and how he cherishes his wife. One of the hostesses pointed out his tie clip as being very fashionable, and the other hostess praised a small glass-shaped badge on his lapel. Indeed, he wore a high-quality suit, tie and hat and was clearly interested in fashion.

As in the above example, *shimoneta* and praising customers are typical of conversations in clubs but these alone are not enough to make customers regularly come back to a club. Tani once told me, 'Giving praise is not enough, anyone can do it. There are two things which make a hostess competent and popular. One of them is titillating/entertaining customers with conversation (*kaiwa*

de kusuguru)'. (The other aspect is '*haraga suwatte iru*' or '*dōji nai*' (having a lot of guts or have nerves of steel).) For example, in the case of Kida-sensei's table, when we were talking about something serious, after a few minutes, Mika rhythmically commented, 'Ahh, Kida-sensei is playing nice! Usually, you are not like this!' (*ara, nandaka Kida-sensei ga ii hito kyara ni natteru! itsumo son nan ja nai noni!*). With her comment, Mika teased Kida-sensei, labelling him as a 'bad' man in a way which made Kida-sensei feel good. Hostesses are not just hearing and praising customers, but teasing them and reacting to customers' desires as listeners.

Drinking and creating a fun conversation are not the only job. They manage their bodies in many ways at a table. First, hostesses must keep straightening their back and must not lean on a backrest of a seat. Chairs placed on the corridor side do not have backrests and are usually used only by hostesses. This rule indicates the importance of elegant, confident posture, rather than showing a relaxed, friendly posture. When drinking as much as possible, they must still maintain a straight back. When walking either inside or outside of a club, experienced hostesses walk with their back straight. After a month of work, Tani told me, 'It is good to behave in a reserved way as a novice hostess, but you should go to the next step. You should show your confidence. Do not hesitate. Try to walk with a straight back inside the club'. This advice clearly shows the significance of showing confidence as a hostess.

In addition, hostesses cannot cross their legs in a club. Once I crossed my legs while all hostesses were waiting for the first customers coming, Mika kindly said to me, 'No legs please'. I was surprised that even though there were no customers, hostesses should not cross their legs in a club. Most of the hostesses wear short and tight dresses, therefore they automatically sit with their legs closed. They must wear high heels, so they are unable to run. Furthermore, tables are low, thus hostesses cannot rest their arms on a table or cup their chins in their hands. I have never seen hostesses cross her arms. They hold their hands and beautifully place them on their thighs when they are not talking or have to be quiet. The more experienced, the better the display. They control their faces, intentionally smiling or laughing. Hostesses control their body in many restricted ways.

Protecting their own bodies without offending customers is also an important work for hostesses at a table. Some regulars or drunk customers might touch a hostess's breasts, arm, thigh, hip, back or attempt to hug or kiss them. Hostesses do not directly reject this behaviour. For example, when a customer touches a hostess's breast, she keeps talking, holds her back straight and does not brush his hand away. She knows he wants either to show performative intimacy in

front of others, or tease or play with her, but he will not continue for a long time. Other hostesses take the customer's hand and put it on her thigh in order to stop him from touching her breast (Hōjō 2014:184). Sociologist Kawabata Tomoko (2001:64–65) labels these hostesses' physical strategies against sexual violence as '*bitai*' and describes that this is a way to keep an affectionate relationship while not giving customers sexual satisfaction. In this way, hostesses control both their own and customers' bodies. As Kawabata explains, hostesses do not simply restrict their bodies, but strategically control their bodies either to give a confident and elegant impression or to protect themselves.

After 20 minutes or so, I was called to sit with another customer. Yamamoto said, 'Nanase-san, please greet other customers' *(Nanase-san, goaisatsu desu)*. I finished my drink and said, 'Thank you for the lovely drink' (*gochisō samadeshita*) while raising my glass to Kida-sensei's glass. He also raised his glass. I put my coaster on top of my glass and placed them at a corner of the table. I stood up and bowed before leaving the seat and went back to the waiting space at once. A concierge whispered the next customers' names and guided me to the table. When a hostess has to hurry to move to other customers, it is allowed not completely to empty her glass. However, it can be considered as wasting the customers' drink. Finding the right timing to say 'Thank you for the lovely drink' in order to leave the seat is sometimes a bit difficult, because this type of behaviour could disturb the conversation. In the beginning, I found this very difficult, however, I realised that whenever I acted, I would interrupt a conversation, so I should not hesitate to leave a table.

3.1.6 Alcohol as a generator of hierarchy, and the elevator as an indicator of hierarchy

Hierarchies in hostess clubs are strict and multi-layered. There are hierarchies of customer-hostess, of customer-staff, of hostess-staff, among customers and among hostesses. Basically, all customers are superior to hostesses as they are the people who bring in the money. Among customers, regulars are at the top of the hierarchy. They tend to be senior, successful businessmen and pay large sums of money. Other semi-regular/non-regular senior customers could also be at the top of the hierarchy depending on their age, status and the amount of money they spend. When customers bring guests, they would either be their subordinate employees (*buka*), colleagues or

business partners. Senior guests of high social status are acknowledged either as being equal to the regular customers who brought these guests or as being superior to the regular customers at a table. Junior guests in their 20s, 30s and 40s who do not pay for bills are placed lowest in the hierarchy.

Customers rely on hostesses for psychological well-being or support to business interactions, while hostesses financially rely on customers. Even though both customers and hostesses rely on each other, it is always customers who have more power than hostesses. This is because, first, money is the true power in a hostess club, and second, hostesses intentionally generate the hierarchy. Sociological theorist Richard Marc Emerson (1972; 1962) discusses that power is 'a structurally induced phenomenon' and 'resides implicitly in the other's dependency'. Indeed, hostesses rely on customers' money, which structurally generates customers' power over hostesses. This also indicates the stronger power of money over emotional labour.

Moreover, hostesses intentionally build the hierarchy and put customers in a powerful position, which is the service or way to entertain customers, especially in Ginza[xiii]. Philosopher Michel Foucault (1978:47) famously said that power is brought and enforced by people themselves, not by 'the authority'. In this Foucauldian sense, hostesses themselves enhance the hierarchy. They sometimes even actively and consciously give male customers power, and manifest their subordination, which is the way for hostesses to succeed. Subordinates do not always reproduce hierarchy subconsciously, sometimes they consciously create and intensify it for their benefits. Customers are powerful because of their wealth and the service offered by hostesses.

In Club Mizuno, Sayuri-mama is at the top of the hierarchy among hostesses and staff. She and some senior hostesses can be superior to junior guests who are young and have been brought along by bosses. Kyōko – the No.1 hostess in her late 30s – and Tani – the senior concierge in his 60s – are ranked second. Kyōko speaks in honorific language to Tani and Tani uses casual language to Kyōko. However, Tani was employed recently, therefore he shows respect to her position, such as not using her for *aftā* or never saying *omae* (you) or *aitsu* (that person) to her. Other senior and popular hostesses follow them. Yamamoto – a junior concierge/manager in his 30s – and other members of staff come next. Although Yamamoto is the manager of the club, because of his age and kind character, he is often scolded by senior hostesses. Finally, middle and lower-ranking hostesses are put at the bottom of the hierarchy.

[xiii] Hostess clubs in the other areas or cabaret clubs could have more flexible hierarchy as cutomers sometimes enjoy the more friendly atmosphere. For example, in a Korean club in Kawasaki where I worked, some customers – not all – seem to prefer the less hierarchical atmosphere.

Hostesses' ranking depends on their position: Mama, No.1 hostess, No.2 hostess, *uriage* hostess and *help* hostess, as well as on their age, work experience as a hostess in general, time in Club Mizuno and by the number of customers they have. For example, Mio is a hostess approaching 40 years old. She used to work as a hostess in her hometown and had recently started working in Ginza. As she is relatively new to Club Mizuno and does not have customers in Ginza, she uses honorific language to Kyōko, while Kyōko uses casual language to her. As another example, only Sayuri-mama and Kyōko use a small box in the kitchen as a chair while waiting for customers, but the others have to stand. Even this invisible rule of the chair indicates the strict hierarchy among hostesses.

Regular customers and concierges tend to have unique relationships in a club. After all, their relationships are the typical superior customer to subordinate members of staff, but sometimes it could also be in the mode of a *senpai-kōhai* (a senior and junior worker) relationship or even that of siblings or trustworthy 'buddies'. Concierges sometimes become those who offer a safe haven for customers who are not interested in hostesses. They provide male-bonding, which eventually offers opportunities for customers to enhance their masculinity.

People often believe that alcohol loosens the hierarchy because of the famous concept 'bureikō'. *Bureikō* means loosening hierarchies and breaking tensions between employees and employers or subordinates and superiors with the help of alcohol in a drinking situation, therefore allowing all members to be equal and allowed to talk freely and honestly with each other. It is said that this situation happens at the initiation of a superior when drinking. However, I did not see any *bureikō* actually happening in the club. Customers bring their existing hierarchies into a club and keep acknowledging those hierarchies. I observed several subordinate customers being talkative to their superiors whilst drinking, however I did not see any subordinates behaving very casually or disagreeing with their superiors, even when they were completely drunk.

More precisely, alcohol in Ginza hostess clubs has two functions: making everyone chatty and less shy while re-creating the hierarchy. After all, alcohol is an important lubricant to invigorate hostesses and customers. For example, Sayuri-mama once told me, 'Arriving at the Club Mizuno, I drink two glasses of beer before I start working. I cannot converse with customers sober'. In the NHK TV program featuring hostesses, (4.16.2018), a Mama in a different club in Ginza said that she drinks four glasses of wine before working because she is shy. This concept also applies to customers. Allison (1994:45) also observes that alcohol dissolves barriers between

customers, and loosens the social order within the individual, thus creating the fun atmosphere. Similarly, I found that because of this effect, hostesses sense that they are allowed to show friendly attitudes and use casual language, which I call a language illusion (see more details in chapter 3.2.5). Alcohol helps hostesses and customers to be lively on the surface.

On the other hand, alcohol enhances hierarchy. In terms of pouring manners, usually, in a business drinking occasion, a host first pours sake for guests in order for the host symbolically to become the servant, and then guests reciprocate. In this way, they re-affirm their social pact (Befu 1974). Similarly, Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1969:59–61) describes an etiquette in which, in lower-priced restaurants in the south of France, one does not pour wine into one's own glass, rather one pours into the glass of a stranger sitting at a neighbouring table and this person normally reciprocates. Lévi-Strauss argues that this principle of reciprocity calls for conversation and intimacy. In a hostess club in Ginza, however, there is no reciprocal etiquette of pouring[xiv]. Only hostesses or *kurofuku* serve alcohol while this alcohol belongs to customers, so the host of the table is the customer. Therefore, hostesses are servants (not symbolic servants) as well as receivers of alcohol while customers are hosts and givers, which generates a clear hierarchy.

Toasting also indicates a customer's higher position over hostesses. Hostesses hold their glasses with both hands, try to reach customers' glasses and raise the glasses to them, saying 'Thank you for letting me join you'. The hostesses' glasses have to touch the lower part of the customers' glasses. Customers hold their glasses with one hand and simply raise it. They tend not to say anything.

Moreover, on drinking manners, customers often prefer hostesses who can drink a lot rather than those who do not drink. This is because drinking a lot could mean an active acceptance of the hierarchy and an expression of deference, which helps customers to feel dominant. On the other hand, if hostesses limit their drinking or leave some drink in the glass, it could connote a refusal of becoming a member of his team or of the hierarchy, not simply a waste of drink.

Historically, drinking alcohol offered by a host and becoming drunk was considered good manners in Japan. Citing records of people's lives written by Joao Rodriguez Tcuzu, a missionary from Europe, Historian Kumakura Isao (2014:63, 74) states people in Japan – in late medieval Japan and the beginning of early modern – considered it good manners to get drunk or at least

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[xiv] In a Korean club I worked, a pouring etiquette was reciprocal. If customers order a bottle of wine or beer, the customers pour glasses first and hostesses reciprocate. If customers have keep-bottles, hostess prepare drinks.

pretend to be drunk at drinking occasions in order to express respect and appreciation towards hosts. Even being completely inebriated was considered good manners to complete a drinking event. This lasted into the early Shōwa period. '*Sahō to reishiki'*, a manner guide published in 1928, tried to correct a misunderstanding that limiting or declining drink is modest and reserved (Kumakura 20014:90). '*Nichijō reihō no kokoroe'*, an etiquette book (1939) was published to consolidate national manners, saying, 'Good etiquette is not (to behave in a reserved way and to refrain from drinking), rather, it is to get familiar with and enjoy (drinking) from the bottom of one's heart' (*shin no reihō wa sonna mono dewa nai. mushiro kokoro kara shitashimu koto no dekiru no ga rēhō no hongi de aru.*) (Kumakura 2014:64). Alcohol that is offered should not be declined, and this applies to contemporary hostess clubs.

Although hostesses have to drink to show their deference and to reduce the amount of alcohol in a customer's bottle, they must not become totally drunk. Hostesses should control the amount of alcohol they drink in order not to become very intoxicated, whilst drinking enough both to become lively themselves and to accept the hierarchy. However, in reality, I saw several hostesses including Sayuri-mama completely drunk. I was also completely inebriated once and had a blackout the next day. Drunk hostesses are considered unsophisticated. In addition, they are often taken advantage of sexually by customers or other members of staff in ways such as being hugged, kissed, touched or even raped. The club rule – avoiding being drunk – actually protects the hostess.

When it comes to customers, being drunk is allowed, but is not considered sophisticated. I sometimes saw extremely drunk customers in Club Mizuno. Some of them could not keep the flow of conversations and others started touching or flirting with hostesses. They could not remember hostesses' names and faces, which means that they probably would not come back to the club. Hostesses dislike these customers who do not bring profits, and therefore become reluctant to communicate with them.

For hostesses, alcohol is a means of earning money. The more hostesses drink, the more they can bring profits to a club. After all, the more hostesses sit together, the faster the bottle is consumed. Sometimes before sitting at a table, a concierge whispers to a hostess, 'It is a chance bottle', which means please drink quickly, do not miss the chance to empty the bottle and let the customer order a new bottle. A very few customers who cannot come to a club regularly drink without having a keep bottle. In this case, a concierge whisperers to a hostess, 'It is the club's bottle, so you do not need to make an effort'. Alcohol is a direct tool to bring in the money.

For low-ranking hostesses, alcohol is also a tool to win superiors' trust. Once Sayuri-mama proudly said to a customer, 'Nanase-chan can drink a lot, more than me'. Although I strongly disagree with this statement because Sayuri-mama's capacity for a drink is extreme, I realised that drinking a good amount brings trust and the chance to be considered a useful hostess. If hostesses are not good at drinking but still get customers, they would not be complained about. Low-ranking hostesses who cannot drink much and are not good at conversation would be easily fired.

Due to this drinking role, I learnt that the most fundamental aspect of becoming a hostess is physical endurance. They have to drink plenty of alcohol and stay awake until quite late, sometimes until the morning. This fact surprised me because I assumed that having mental strength is the first requirement. In my case, I worked only three days a week, however, my brain and heart were stimulated by alcohol and people so much that it caused a lack of sleep and nightmares at the beginning. Sometimes I got up confused what time it was (morning or evening) and where I was (Cambridge or Ginza). A healthy, highly-alcohol-tolerant body is required and appreciated.

Returning to the topic of hierarchy, although these hierarchies are tightly established, a temporary hierarchy change can and does happen. When a lower-ranking hostess wins customers' favour and trust, the hierarchy among hostesses is gradually transformed. This change begins to happen during drinking. In this case, middle and higher-ranking hostesses try not to dominate the conversation and perform as supporting figures to their lower-ranking colleague (see an example in Chapter 3.2.6). This change lasts until customers leave the club, and is finally confirmed in the elevator. Sayuri-mama once told me, 'The hostesses' world is characterised by *gekokujō* (overturning hierarchy), so do not hesitate in front of your *senpai* (senior) hostesses. If a customer likes you, he is yours, even if he has a *tantō* hostess. Snatch him away (*ubainasai*)!' The concept of *gekokujō* is clearly reflected in the elevator ride.

Riding in the elevator shows the clear hierarchy between hostesses and customers, and among hostesses themselves. When customers leave their table, hostesses either help them into their jackets or coats, or go to the elevator and push a button to call one. Usually, a lower-ranking hostess controls the elevator. She enters an empty one first and holds the button to keep the door open with her right hand, holding the door with her left hand just in case it closes. Then, the higher-ranking customers enter the elevator followed by other customers, the Mama and then higher-ranking hostesses. Finally, middle and other lower-ranking hostesses get in. If a lower-ranking hostess misses the controlling position somehow and a higher ranking hostess is in charge of the controls,

the lower-ranking hostess should replace her when she enters the elevator, saying 'Please let me be in charge of it' while the elevator is moving.

If there are already several people from other clubs in the elevator and a hostess from another club is controlling the elevator button, customers will enter first and then higher-ranking hostesses join them, saying 'Please let us ride together' (*goissho sasete itadakimasu*) or 'Please excuse us getting in' (*shitsurei shimasu*). Lower-ranking hostesses get in, saying the same phrases.

If there are too many people in the elevator, there are two ways to deal with the situation: either waiting for the next chance to get an empty elevator, or getting in but limiting the number of hostesses seeing customers off. In the latter case, lower-ranking hostesses and sometimes concierges either stay and bow to see customers off in front of the closing elevator door, or use the stairs to go to the ground floor. If customers have clearly enjoyed the company of a lower-ranking hostess during their time at the club, but the elevator is overcrowded due to the rush hour to go home, she should ride in the elevator regardless of ranking in order to see the customer off. In this case, except for the Mama and *tantō* hostess, middle or higher-ranking hostesses would stay and bow at the closing elevator door instead. In other words, ranking among hostesses can be temporarily changed according to customers' preferences and it is clearly shown at the elevator. This temporary hierarchy change illustrates an opportunity for a lower-ranking hostess to dominate a situation and gain trust from customers and higher-ranking hostesses. For the long term, in a case where these customers become her customers, this temporary power could turn into a source that she can rely on to gain money and connection. Winning customers' favour is power.

When getting off an elevator, a lower-ranking hostess must keep holding the button of the door to keep it open and allow others to get off. At this point, the hostess who stands closest to the door has to get out first regardless of her ranking, followed by higher-ranking customers, other customers, the Mama if she is there, and higher and lower-ranking hostesses. If the temporary ranking change is happening, but a lower-ranking hostess is controlling the elevator, a middle or lower-ranking hostess replaces her when customers start getting off. A middle or other lower-ranking hostess helps her to get out of the elevator sooner and enable her to follow customers quickly while the door is open on the ground floor. In this way, she can immediately follow the customers and keeps up a conversation with them without waiting for everyone to get off.

After seeing off customers, Mama and hostesses say to the *tantō* hostess, 'Thank you for the lovely drinks'. After that, a lower-ranking hostess again has to call an elevator and to enter first to

keep the door open, and she will be the last to get off. Therefore, the temporary hierarchy change disappears at this point and goes back to normal. No one teaches these unwritten rules, but hostesses from other clubs in the same building behave in the same way. All hostesses eventually acquire these unspoken elevator rules.

Alcohol and the elevator reflect the mechanism of hierarchy in a hostess club. However, these two are not only the aspects to generate and intensify the hierarchy. Conversations between hostesses and customers also create power relations minute by minute and word by word. In the next section, I focus on hostesses' listening strategies to entertain customers.

3.2 Titillating customers by listening

The famous ethnographic research on hostesses in Roppongi, Tokyo in 1981, conducted by Anne Allison (1996) reveals how hostesses assist white-collar men to intensify their masculinity through intimate interactions with hostesses and to strengthen their male bonds, which ultimately sustains Japanese corporate culture. She discloses two crucial strategies that hostesses use to entertain customers: femininity/sexuality and subordination. In my fieldwork, I found these two points still to be at the core of hostess communication, even forty years after Allison's research. However, from my observations, she fails to provide adequate analyses of how femininity/sexuality and subordination influence interactions and relationships between hostesses and customers.

Femininity is obviously significant in stimulating customers' masculinity, just as Allison describes. Hostesses are often said to sell their femininity or themselves through their sexuality ('*iro de uru*') (Matsuda 2008:187) (Allison 1996; Kawabata 1998, 2001; Matsuda 2008). Alison (1996:151–187) argues that a range of elements appeals to male customers, stimulating their sense of masculinity: the presence of hostesses as female; sexualised conversation (for example, teasing about breast size or male sexual prowess); flirting and being flirted with; and maternal performance (in addition to drinking alcohol and hostesses' subordination). For example, customers need sexualised conversation because this creates a gender imbalance, which allows men to dominate women, to enhance their masculinity and to create male-bonding (see more details in Chapter 3.2.4). Alison's analysis (1994:173) also shows that hostesses' femininity is attractive, representing a mother substitute. Just like a real 'mother', the hostesses indulge, accept and

understand men, but unlike a real mother, they allow customers freely to come and go without traditional mother-son ties. Femininity is therefore fundamental in seducing and indulging men and, enhancing their masculinity.

However, hostesses' femininity could be only the initial source of attraction for customers. Sociologist Matsuda Saori (2008:187–189) argues that seduction techniques, such as '*renai gokko*' (pretending to have a romantic relationship) do not fully explain hostesses' interactions, and argues that hostesses attract customers by their femininity/sexuality first, and then build 'a good (trusting) relationship' by having fun conversations and speaking candidly. Author Hōjō Kaya (2014:153–159) also mentions that an experienced *kyabajō* (hostesses in cabaret clubs) tends to create a close friend/comrade-ship or a senior-junior relationship rather than deploying '*iro koi eigyō*' (literally means 'sensuous love trade', or a commodified romantic relationship (Takeyama 2016:87)). During my fieldwork, I also observed that sexual/femininity-based interaction often shifted to skilled conversational interaction, even though hostesses constantly appeal to their femininity to some extent.

What is skilled conversational interaction? This includes communication such as strategic questioning, teasing customers back, responding with witty replies without dominating the conversation, rewarding their hard work, praising their characteristics and even sometimes verbally challenging men. In other words, hostesses titillate customers through conversation and generate fun and satisfying interactions. In this way, customers are drawn to these hostesses. A customer who is sexually attracted to and conversationally satisfied by a hostess starts to build a trusting relationship with the hostess.

In building trusting relationships, hostesses perform in various guises such as: a magician doing mind-reading; an entertainer creating a lively and cheerful atmosphere; a comedian or a straight man in a comedy duo; a comrade sharing the bitterness of their life and the reality of Japanese economic recession; and a best friend displaying empathy and giving empowerment. Acting as a sexy mistress, benevolent mother or caregiver are not the only roles hostess display.

However, this analysis is still insufficient to explain hostesses' core interaction and relationship with clients. The core interaction revolves around subordination. This subordination, moreover, has two different aspects. Firstly, as Allison says (1994:165, 183–184), hostesses remain in a subordinate position, allowing customers to make fun of them, to lecture them, and to evaluate and ogle their body and appearance. In these ways, men strengthen their sense of

dominance and bonds between each other as men. Thus, hostess-customer relations can be seen as subordinate-superior or servant-master relationships as Allison says.

However, secondly, I found customers also give hostesses support, take care of them, and help them to survive in a competitive hostess business. Japanologist Brian McVeigh (1996) points out that showing cuteness (*kawaii*), which also connotes weakness, submissiveness and humility, often is a way to obtain attention and favour by arousing the protective instinct in others. In the same way, by staying in a humble and submissive position, hostesses stimulate a desire to support them. This supportive behaviour possibly brings two types of results. First, some customers become a giver or even a hero, which is a type of power, and enjoy being relied upon by hostesses whom they like. Second, some customers feel satisfied through gaining appreciation and a sense of recognition, which are not necessarily related to power or masculinity. Both cases nurture intimacy and develop their close relationships. Because the customers eventually grow to enjoy intimacy with hostesses, their relationships tend to be recognised as quasi-romantic relationships, but they are more precisely trusting relationships, something like the mixture of an idol and a fan, a daughter and a father/grandfather, junior-senior, a student and a coach and comradeships. Sociologist Katherine Frank (1998) similarly states how sex and intimacy are configured in a strip club. She analyses regular male customers who buy individual conversational times with female dancers and describes that the dancers offer a variety of services such as: 'listening to his stories, boosting his ego, entertaining him with light conversation, and looking attractive for him'. These she labels traditional roles of women. Frank concludes that the customers believe that they come back to see particular dancers out of their sexual desires for the dancers, but may completely misrecognise that the dancers are fulfilling their needs of intimacy. Like the dancers, hostesses develop intimate, trusting relationships with customers, especially using their humble and submissive positions. While the customers think they gain sexual stimulation, they can also be gaining satisfaction through intimate relationships.

In this stance, listening is the best tool to entertain customers because hostesses can avoid dominating a conversation while still proactively getting involved in a conversation. Allison confirms that the Mama is always a good listener;

The Mama is a good listener but in no way a passive conversationalist. She would sustain dialogues with concern, flattery, and flirtation. Speaking at times in a whisper, she would pick up

on, reflect, and then enhance whatever the man felt most at ease with about himself. She would ask him for advice on matters she knew he could handle and compliment him on qualities he was straining to achieve. (Allison 1994:68)

The Mama is a proactive listener who deploys conversational skills and enhances close relationships with customers. Allison also partially depicts how hostesses communicate as follows;

If the man tells a joke, the hostess comments that he's a good teller of jokes. If the man announces he went to England the week before on business, the hostess says that he must be smart enough to speak fluent English. If the man sings a song, the hostess proclaims him one of the finest singers she's ever heard. If the man says he golfs, the hostess pulls up his shirt sleeve and says no wonder his arm is so muscular and tanned. The skill, as I learned, is to accept, reflect, and augment the man as he has chosen to reveal himself. Whether he talks about his thirty-foot penis or his joy in collecting stamps, the hostess is supposed to hear him out, comment on what he says, and swear that the qualities he has revealed are exactly what a woman like herself finds irresistibly attractive. The hostess is not supposed to challenge the man's presentation of himself, and she is never to coopt his authority by reversing their roles. (Allison 1996:177)

Hostesses in this description can be considered performing listeners. Allison (1996:178) explains that hostesses' subservient and deferential attitudes make men feel approved of and appreciated. I also found this type of listening in my fieldwork.

Her ethnographic description, however, leaves the impression that hostesses' labour is very unskilled and effortless, while customers always have unsatisfactory masculinity and low self-esteem, and are essentially foolish. Although this is partially true, I learnt in Club Mizuno that if hostesses are simply submissive and praise customers, customers get bored quickly and will never come back. Again, hostesses have to entertain customers in conversation. However, because they should not dominate a conversation, they perform as listeners and entertain customers.

Overall, Allison overlooks hostesses' communication tactics of changing the way they use their femininity/sexuality and subordination, and therefore misses the nuances of micro communication happening between customers and hostesses. What Allison observes might be something I call 'group masculinity' in a club, which is characterised by male-bonding and

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domination over women as a group of men. However, I focus more on hostesses' communication and observe how it affects individual male customers including their 'discreet masculinity' and intimate relationships. Compared to the 80s and 90s when Allison carried out her research in Roppongi, now group business nights-out do not happen as frequently and luxuriously as before, and individual regular customers (possibly bringing one or two guests) are more common. Therefore, interpersonal relationships between a customer and a hostess seem to be an important aspect in a hostess club. When focusing on hostesses' listening, one can see the dynamic of such relationships. In the following sections, I open a window onto hostesses' communication strategies to entertain customers and unwritten listening rules in a hostess club.

3.2.1 Telling 'who I am' without becoming a dominant speaker

In the beginning of a conversation, having a small narrative of 'who I am' brings a huge advantage for a novice or low-ranking hostess because it helps both to create a smooth and friendly conversation and to increase chances of being remembered by customers. In order to introduce 'who I am', hostesses have to have a unique background or characteristic. For example, Risa – a novice hostess in her late 20s – used to work as an elementary school teacher, therefore Tani always introduces her as a former teacher. Customers often ask her, 'Why did you quit your job?' She starts a conversation by answering this question briefly. Conversely, Mana – a novice hostess in her mid-20s – is introduced to customers without any introduction of 'who she is'. She works as a hip-hop dance coach during the daytime but Tani does not explain this as he assumes this will not attract customers. Therefore, she simply sits at the table and has to ask customers questions without introducing herself. She is pretty and young, therefore customers usually show their excitement at the beginning, but she ends up often being a passive listener. These cases show two benefits of explaining 'who I am' at the beginning of a conversation: making a conversation smooth by exposing one-self before asking others to open up, and being more likely to be remembered by customers.

In my case, often when I joined a table in the middle of a conversation, either the concierges or other hostesses introduced me to customers as a student from the UK, because this made me a useful *neta* (topic to talk about). Customers either casually asked me why I was working as a hostess or assumed what I would be interested in and started talking about a topic potentially

related to me. When I explained I was researching hostesses and their communication, conversations often turned to Japanese culture, customs, habit and behaviour – for example anything from *geisha* to bowing. I often ended up introducing my supervisor's research about *inemuri* (dozing off)*,* making customers laugh. Many customers talked with me about their business or private experiences overseas, as well as about their opinions on business abroad and its globalisation. They also asked me many questions related to the UK and news happening abroad. These conversational tendencies occur because customers predict what I could understand and what I would be interested in, which is called 'schemas' of communicators. Listeners' types of schemas, which are built by an accumulation of experiences and knowledge, influence the efficiency and accuracy of listening (Itō 2008:129, 134). Customers assumed schemas and treated me as a listener with schemas covering overseas experiences and knowledge of Japanese culture. As a consequence, I was sometimes greeted with 'Hey, Cambridge!', instead of my name. As this nickname shows, (first-)impression management by 'who I am' has an impact on the rest of the conversation and a potential benefit of being remembered.

Although I call this strategy 'a micro-narrative', hostesses rarely narrate their life stories nor become dominant speakers in this talk. In my case, I simply replied to a question by a short explanation, which eventually acted as an introduction, but I neither initiated an explanation about myself nor talked for a long time or held the floor. Therefore, I became a speaker by being involved in an act of speaking while also performing as a listener because the definition of listening included responding. Risa was the same.

Where, then, is the line between becoming categorised as a speaker or a listener? Do hostesses ever perform purely as speakers? Of course, hostesses converse both as a speaker and listener, but I would like to suggest a different categorisation about who is considered a 'speaker' and 'listener' from the conventional view.

Linguists often treat everyone who articulates something as a speaker. For example, sociolinguists Sacks, Harvey, Schegloff, Emanuel and Jefferson, Gail (1974) propose the fundamental and well-known organisation of talk called 'turn-taking', explaining the way in which a communicator becomes a speaker with a right or obligation to talk in turn and constructs a conversation on a turn-by-turn basis. This mechanism is also applicable to Japanese conversations (Tanaka 1999). Although they analyse conversations as products of the interaction between

speakers and listeners, these academics view everyone articulating something as a speaker with active listenership.

In my research, I would like to propose a role-based distinction or spectrum. When a person speaks for a certain amount of time/volume and holds the floor, I would like to call this interlocutor a 'speaker'. Therefore, a person who does storytelling, lectures, gives information or recounts issues/experience is said to be involved in acts of speaking, and to become a speaker. On the other hand, a person asking a question, confirming or summarising what is said, or responding or commenting briefly without clearly holding the floor, is seen to be engaged in acts of speaking but to be defined as a listener, as Den (2009) and Yamada (2015) also suggests 'listeners talk' [xv] (see the definition of listening in chapter 1.2).

However, when responding or commenting briefly, how should we distinguish whether one holds the floor or not? The Cambridge dictionary defines 'holding the floor' as 'to speak to a group of people, often for a long time, without allowing anyone else to speak' (Cambridge dictionary online, accessed October 2019), which connotes getting attention from audiences and staying in the centre of a conversation. In this sense, listeners' short responses can be categorised into two types; a short response to what the previous speaker just said, and a short response about one's own self. A person who makes the former type of reply does not easily hold the floor and can let the main speaker remain in the centre, therefore this person is a listener even though getting involved in an act of speaking. For example, when hostesses briefly praise or tease customers, they are listeners because they put customers in the centre of the interaction and do not hold the floor. An interlocutor who responds to a previous speaker by the latter type of reply could have both the roles of a speaker and listener, because speaking about one's own self is an act of holding the floor and gaining attention, which means becoming a speaker while responding is defined as the role of a listener. By having both roles, although talking about herself, a hostess does not necessarily dominate a conversation. This is what I did as a hostess by deploying a micro-narrative. If I had developed my narrative at too great a length it would have meant that I was holding the floor and had abandoned my role as a listener.

[xv] For example, Ueno (2011) categorises listeners' responses into eight groups: *aizuchi* and echoing, asking questions, confirming what is said, giving information or conveying an opinion, commenting thoughts, predicting and articulating something which is expected to be said by a speaker, answering a question and agreeing with what is said.

The shift of role also happens the other way around. Sometimes a current speaker asks a question at the end of her/his talk, which is a typical pattern of turn-taking. At this point, this person is said to lose the role of a speaker and gain the role of a listener by giving the floor to someone else.

Communicators flexibly gain and lose both the roles of a speaker and listener, and sometimes individuals keep the double roles – a speaker and a listener – and their roles overlap. Therefore I suggest this categorisation as a role-based spectrum. This categorisation also shows that people create a conversation not only as a speaker but also as a listener.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that hostesses recognise the importance of becoming speakers and sometimes simply perform as speakers. For example, Minako, a former hostess who has 10 years' experience, says that she used to make notes whenever she came across funny stories or useful information, so she could entertain her customers by speaking and sustain the conversation. Tsukasa, a high-ranking hostess in her 40s, varies the amount of speaking depending on her customers. Aoi, a middle-ranking hostess in her 30s, says, 'Hostesses talk a lot! I talk a lot.' They understand that sometimes they have to become speakers.

Although hostesses recognise the significance of both being a speaker and a listener, why are they especially famous as good listeners? This is because they often stay either in the role of the listener or in a position which consists of both roles of the speaker and the listener. In other words, they neither dominate a conversation nor hold the floor, even though they are involved in acts of speaking. They stay in a supportive position through performing as listeners.

Thus far, an introduction of 'who I am' helps customers in opening up, which eventually escalates to intimacy, and assists hostesses both to start a conversation smoothly and to stand out by making a strong impression. I also propose a role-based spectrum to distinguish communicators' positions as either a speaker or listener.

3.2.2 Do not become too self-assertive, but do not hold back too much

A small opening-up ('who I am') helps in starting a conversation, but hostesses should not hold the floor in a conversation. This could be the worst mistake in a club. Therefore, they need to manage their self-assertiveness. One way of doing this is what I call 'not becoming too self-

assertive but not holding back too much' (*desugi nai kedo hikisugi nai*). All experienced hostesses who are good-listeners embody this quality.

I came across this idea one day in the middle of February. Ebihara-sensei, a male dentist in his 60s, came to the club. He is tall and wears a good quality, navy suit and an expensive wristwatch. He speaks slowly in a low tone of voice and smiles gently. Because there were not many customers at this time, Ebihara-sensei was surrounded by six hostesses and Sayuri-mama. I joined the table a bit later and Sayuri-mama introduced me to him. Usually, if there are only a few hostesses, each hostess becomes immediately proactive to develop a conversation. However, because there were too many hostesses for one customer, some hostesses including me were simply smiling and nodding.

But I started to feel that I was being of no use to the conversation, even though Sayuri-mama had deliberately introduced me to him. I had to become proactive, but how? I was surrounded by six experienced hostesses and the Mama. I observed everyone for a while and realised that when a hostess says something, she gets a customer's attention in the form of a reply or eye contact. She then replies briefly again. This is how a normal conversation evolves (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). A conversation in a hostess club, however, differs from a normal conversation in two ways; firstly, a customer should always be placed at the centre of the conversation; and secondly, the ratio of communicators' speaking and listening time are uneven, so customers often relatively talk more and hostesses listen more (but not always). Sometimes hostesses have to speak to keep up a conversation, however, doing this too much is not acceptable, because taking a leading role in a conversation means getting attention, which should be assigned to customers. Therefore, hostesses keep their contributions brief. In that way, they can show their participation, can be remembered by customers and will avoid being too self-assertive. Based on this understanding, because we were talking about diseases, I asked a question about the human body and the immune system (I cannot remember the exact question). Ebihara-sensei replied to me. I made a short comment and he in turn developed the conversation. It was working.

As a novice hostess, I also realised that I should not take every chance to ask questions or make comments. I should not dominate much among other experienced hostesses although I should not hold back too much either.

It seemed my strategy was right, because while we were talking, Yamamoto called hostesses one by one from the table, and these hostesses then went home due to the approach of closing time.

In the end, Mio, an experienced, low-ranking hostess in her 40s, and I were left at the table. We ended up joining *aftā* that Sayuri-mama and Ebihara-sensei were planning.

Sayuri-mama develops this behaviour of 'not becoming too self-assertive but not holding back too much' to a slightly intensified version, which I call 'never-give-up listening style'. No matter if customers catch her comments or not, she continues contributing to a conversation by making short remarks. This is a kind of zealous listening, because it shows constant enthusiasm and interest in the speaker. For example, when a customer said, 'I want to go on holiday, maybe a desert island' and Sayuri-mama replied, 'Ah, I want to go to a desert island too'. No one caught Sayuri-mama's comment or followed it up. The customer started talking about a slightly different topic, but Sayuri-mama never cares about being ignored and never hesitates to utter something again. This sounds easy to do; however, it is actually difficult to carry out in front of customers and other experienced hostesses. Novice hostesses like me tend to articulate something when customers' attention is definitely directed at us, or when it is definitely the right timing for a hostess to utter something in turn, but not Sayuri-mama. And this is why Sayuri-mama can join every conversation smoothly, even though she moves constantly from table to table. This 'never-give-up listening style' can also contribute to reducing possible moments of silence and to making a conversation lively.

The risk of this behaviour is being seen as demonstrating too much self-assertion. This is particularly perceived as bad manners at clubs in Ginza, although hostesses have to say something and show their interests. As the famous Japanese proverb says, 'a nail that stands up will be hammered down', standing out from the crowd always carries a risk of being cast out. In any case, customers should be placed at the top of the hierarchy, after which would come Sayuri-mama or a *tantō*-hostess. Speaking or uttering something is standing-out behaviour, therefore, this behaviour might well be easier for a Mama or higher-ranking hostesses to do, but not so easy for lower-ranking hostesses. The higher the hostess's ranking is, the less their interventions would be seen as self-assertion.

Hostesses sometimes need a 'complete-holding-back' attitude. One day in April, a regular customer Katsumata-san, a man in his 50s, came to Club Mizuno with his forty-something junior Murata-san. They were accompanied by another guest, Taniguchi-san, a man in his 40s to 50s who has a work connection with Katsumata-san. Taniguchi-san clearly behaves as an inferior to Katsumata-san. At the point when Katsumata-san became completely drunk, he asked Taniguchi-san how much debt his company has now. Taniguchi-san answered, 'It is ...yen...' and Katsumata-

san replied, 'That's only half of the debt I had at the worst point! I have already paid back more than half! You need to become more strategic and need to have a clear plan to deal with it. You do not have these plans?!' His tone was clearly a lecture. Taniguchi-san said, 'Yes... I will do my best...' but did not give any detailed plans. Katsumata-san's attention turned to his employee Murata-san, and said: 'You too! I promoted you! What is your three-month target, six-months target and year's goal to contribute to our company? You should have the facts at your fingertips!' Murata-san vaguely replied, 'Yes...' and the conversation turned to another topic. While Katsumata-san lectured his colleagues, the hostesses kept quiet, eliminated their presence and did not get involved in their conversation at all in order to offer space and time for the customers. This was a 'complete-holding-back' attitude.

This ability to control self-assertion is called *wakimae* (noun) and *wakimaeru* (verb). This term is usually translated as 'discernment', and refers to 'social norms according to which people are expected to behave' in order to be considered appropriate and polite (Hill *et al*. 1986; Ide Sachiko 1992). Hill at al. (1986) especially emphasise that politeness creates mutual comfort and nurtures rapport, so manipulating politeness by both verbal and non-verbal behaviour is the way to meet the criteria of *wakimae*. Hostesses' self-assertion management also establishes comfort and rapport by showing politeness and deference. However, while conforming to *wakimae*, hostesses also play with *wakimae* rules. They deconstruct the threshold of *wakimae* and expand their comfort zone and rapport, sometimes with the help of alcohol or by changing language use (see more details in chapter 3.2.5). In contrast, they sometimes enhance politeness and deference through following *wakimae* rules strictly. This playfulness is necessary for hostesses' self-assertive control. Hill *et al*. (1986) carry out quantitative, linguistic research of a situation where students borrow a pen from someone. They conclude that both American and Japanese speakers follow the same *wakimae* code, however, Americans attempt to diminish social deference while Japanese focus on strengthening *wakimae* rules. Hostesses' self-assertive management includes both strategies as American and Japanese do.

Wakimae requires understanding and reading a situation in order to fit the situation. Similarly, the behaviour that consists of reading a situation and offering what is required is especially called 'reading the atmosphere' (*kūki o yomu*), which is one of the most important skills for hostesses. In the next section, I explain how *kūki o yomu* works in a hostess club.

3.2.3 Reading the person at the top of the hierarchy

Kūki o yomu (reading the atmosphere) for hostesses means to understand the current situation, to surmise what customers' hierarchies and desires are and to fulfil one's role to the satisfaction of those customers. Hostesses read customers' (and other hostesses') faces, bodily behaviour and both explicit and implicit meanings of what is being said. Do they want to talk or listen? What do they want to talk about? What do they want to hear? What kind of character and role do they want to express? How do they want to be treated in the club? Hostesses receive these types of the most important information through observing, asking questions and reading between the lines, which means performing as listeners. Therefore, although *kūki o yomu* is important for both speakers and listeners, this is especially fundamental for hostesses when performing as listeners.

What then is 'the atmosphere' (*kūki*) to be read? *Kūki* is the emotion of authority. Advising strategies in *gōkon* (a group blind date), self-help book author Mizuno Keiya (2014:778) interprets *kūki o yomu* as understanding and conjecturing what the person at the top of the hierarchy feels and desires. This is exactly what hostesses do as *kūki o yomu*. In hostess clubs, the emotion and desire of the person at the top of the hierarchy create 'the atmosphere'. Similarly, sociologist Arlie Hochschild (2012:158) also points out that 'feeling is tied to power and authority'. She finds that middle-class children tend to learn to read authorities' feelings well because authorities' feelings are often the reason for decision making. This children's learning is the same strategy for hostesses. *Kūki* always links to power.

I encountered a situation where every customer and hostess at the table sensitively focused on a feeling of the person who was clearly at the top of their hierarchy. In late February, Takamizawa-san, a famous TV celebrity in his 70s, came to Club Mizuno, bringing seven men including his son. Takamizawa-san was completely drunk and kept quiet. Other guests were speaking individually with hostesses. Without being ordered, Yamamoto brought glasses of beer for everyone, as this is Takamizawa-san's rule in Ginza clubs.

Despite his young age, the son of Takamizawa-san, a man in his early 40s, was clearly at the second position of the hierarchy among the guests. When he spoke, other guests and hostesses kept quiet. He arrogantly said to the hostesses, 'You guys are so ugly (*busu*), ok, say what is wrong with your appearance one by one'. I was agitated and thinking hard about what to say. Other experienced hostesses seemed to be freezing for a while too, and we made brief eye contact with each other. Fortunately, Takamizawa-san suddenly uttered one or two words and everyone's

attention immediately went to him. Everyone waited for him to say something more and completely forgot the son's suggestion of the discussion. Sayuri-mama said something to Takamizawa-san and tried to converse with him. But he kept quiet and happily smiled. After a few minutes, Takamizawa-san said, 'Let's go!' and left the club. It was just a 10-minute stay as usual. As this example shows, hostesses, and even other guests prioritise reading a superior's feeling, and strive to predict this person's need.

What to read is clear. So how do hostesses do *kūki o yomu*? They describe two different ways. In the case of Minako, a former hostess now in her 40s, she wracks her brain while listening to a customer. Although she has 10 years of experiences as a hostess, she says that it is very tiring. One day, Katakura-sensei, a playwriter, and Minako came to Club Mizuno to see me. At the end of the day, I texted Minako to thank her and praised her natural way of dealing with Katakura-sensei. She replied, 'It seemed I was naturally conversing with him, but in fact, I was wracking my brain the whole time and trying to think what was the best way to communicate with him. I always try to work out what customers want, calculate the consequences and then perform as they want'. Minako has a long-term hostess-customer relationship with Katakura-sensei, however, she still keeps making an effort to communicate with him. I also found the same way to communicate with customers while working.

On the other hand, some hostesses told me that they sometimes do not intentionally *kūki o yomu*, but their mouth, face and brain automatically work as they *kūki o yomu*. They use the word '*kiki nagasu'* to describe it. '*Kiki*' is listening and '*nagasu*' is draining or letting flow. This does not mean avoiding listening but refers to letting what someone says go in one ear and out the other. Once Sayuri-mama and Mika, an experienced hostess in her late 30s, told me, 'It is like I was born with a big mouth. Sometimes, I do *kiki nagasu* and words come out of my mouth without thinking'. However, hostesses never reveal that they are doing *kiki nagasu*. Iwasaki-san, a customer in his 60s, said, 'Hostesses do not listen! But they are good at pretending to listen.' Sayuri-mama replied, 'Yes, sometimes I do not listen to customers. I often listen to only the last part and respond to that in an offhand way'. Some hostesses embody *kūki o yomu* and carry it out even unconsciously.

Although they have different ways to do *kūki o yomu*, Minako, Mika and other hostesses said that 'Maybe hostesses are chameleons'. They are able to read what customers want and change their attitudes as chameleons change their colour depending on situations. Allison also found similar knowledge, among hostesses, of stripping oneself and constructing the desired woman

(1994:185). Changing themselves into the desired one is a component of *kūki o yomu* because this concept includes a part of offering what others want.

Becoming the desired woman could mean performing as a serious and faithful person rather than as a cheerful and happy person if that is what customers want. One rainy Tuesday in March, I was talking with a middle-aged customer about his children. After a while, he quietly confessed to me, 'My eldest daughter would be 24 years old if she was still alive'. He talked about her memory and the car accident that caused her death. I empathetically listened to him and asked questions about her. Towards the end, he told me that he really enjoyed the night. He was surprised that he was able to have both serious and funny conversations in the club, saying, 'I understand why clubs in Ginza are different from other clubs and *kyabakura* (cabaret clubs).' In *kyabakura*, he had experienced that he had to be the one who made conversation lively and take care of *kyabajō* (hostesses in a cabaret club) in terms of communication. He felt that he did not feel that pressure in Ginza clubs.[xvi] Depending on a customer's desires and needs, hostesses even offer serious and quiet conversation, using therapeutic listening.

Through *kūki o yomu*, hostesses offer what customers want, even if it is not what hostesses really want to offer. In this case, *tatemae–honne* communication occurs. *Tatemae* means 'a formally established principle which is not necessarily accepted or practised by the parties involved' while *honne* 'designates true feelings and desires which cannot be openly expressed because of the strength of *tatemae*' (Sugimoto 2002:28). Furthermore, this communication style reveals the necessity of suppressing one's own feelings, which is a subset of *kūki o yomu*.

One day in March, I witnessed Sayuri-mama's *honne–tatemae* communication. Kashiwabara-san, a man in his 70s who owns a company in Tokyo and Vietnam, came to the club with Shinkai-san, a male guest in his 70s who is his business partner in Vietnam. They were already drunk. In the middle of the conversation, Sayuri-mama joined our table and introduced herself to Shinkai-san. Their conversation turned to their business in Vietnam. Shinkai-san half-jokingly suggested that she opens a Ginza-style club in Vietnam. Kashiwabara-san agreed with this idea. Sayuri-mama asked several questions related to opening a business in Vietnam and Kashiwabara-san offered to pay the flight fare if Sayuri-mama came to Vietnam in order to open a club. They enjoyed talking about opening a new club in Vietnam until the customers left the club.

[xvi] Not feeling pressure is not always the case. For example, Maro-san, my male friend in his 30s who helped me to get a hostess job, came to Club Mizuno as a customer one day. Later, he told me that he was not able to feel relaxed in the club because he was under a lot of pressure to have conversations in a sophisticated way.

After seeing these customers off on the ground floor, Sayuri-mama uttered, 'Not sure what that was about.' (*nan no koto daka, wake wakannai*). I was shocked because I had received the firm impression that she was interested in the idea. Her attitude was *tatemae* based on her *kūki o yomu* ability, which made the customers satisfied. This example of concealing *honne* feeling shows that *kūki o yomu* requires not only guesswork but also suppressing one's own emotion. This is an implicit rule of *kūki o yomu.*

As I show in these examples, *kūki o yomu* consists of several elements to be fulfilled such as understanding the emotions and desires of the other party, changing oneself to the desired one, controlling one's own emotion and fulfilling others' needs. Therefore, this concept overlaps with other similar terms. For example, compared to *wakimae*, both *wakimae* and *kūki o yomu* require people to understand the other party's situation and emotion, and carry a risk of being stigmatised as '*kūki ga yomenai*' (literally 'cannot read the air', also called KY which is the *romaji* acronym and is nominated as the buzzword of the year 2007) or '*wakimae ga nai*' (not following *wakimae* codes). However, *kūki o yomu* is a more proactive behaviour than *wakimae* to offer creative kindness and to bring not only comfort but also satisfaction, whereas, by *wakimae*, people build comfort by avoiding offending and therefor use politeness. '*Sasshi*' (noun) or '*sassuru*' (verb), meaning guessing what others mean and taking this into account (Miike 2003; Yamada 2015), and '*sontaku*', which means taking into account a superior's opinion and feeling (which won the title of best buzzword-of-the year in 2017) are parts of *kūki o yomu*.

All these concepts – *kūki o yomu*, *wakimae*, *sasshi*, *sontaku* – are intuitive communication skills to fine tune interpersonal relations. People who are involved in these communications are conceptualised as *kanjin* (a contextual man/relational actor) by sociologist Hamaguchi Eshun (1982; 1985; 1996:v). He suggests that the Japanese objectify themselves when they are among others and adjust their behaviour based on others' behaviour and the mutual expectations of the actors' roles. He (1996; 122) criticises Nakane Chie's 'vertical society' (1970) and Doi Takeo's '*amae*' (2007), as they analyse Japanese society based on an assumption that individuals are independent, which he calls methodological individualism. As an alternative, he suggests *kanjin* – a person who considers one's relations as a part of the self. Hostesses' *kūki o yomu* also discloses that they behave depending on others' behaviour and expectations.

In summary, I have described *kūki o yomu* as a fundamental skill for hostesses, especially when performing as listeners. Through succeeding in *kūki o yomu*, hostesses gain correct

information about customers and offer satisfying service. In the case of a hostess club, 'the atmosphere' always means the emotions and desires of the person at the top of the hierarchy. Hostesses strive for reading these, providing what customers want and even controlling their own emotions in order to fulfil customers' needs, something which is often overlooked in understanding *kūki o yomu*. Because of emotional management, they can deploy *honne–tatemae* communication and curate both fun and serious conversations.

Kūki o yomu is a fundamental skill that a hostess must acquire, and it is like armour for them. It provides a sound platform from which to move to more advanced skills such as being witty or titillating. These latter skills could be considered as weapons.

3.2.4 Masters of *tsukkomi/boke* and reaction kings

'Praising customers is not enough, you have to be playful with conversation (*kaiwa de kusuguru*)', said Tani. One of the ways to do this is articulating witty replies or quips (*omoshiroi ainote*), in other words, '*tsukkomi*' (literally 'to poke'). In Japanese comedy duos the *tsukkomi* plays a straight-man sidekick to the funny man who is called '*boke*' (literally meaning 'vagueness'). I would like to use *tsukkomi* as a term to mean replying with witty and quick comments to customers, while *boke* will refer to saying something stupid or out-of-context, or playing dumb or uneducated. In the case of a hostess club, even if a customer's *boke* is not funny, a hostess's following-up *tsukkomi* brings a laugh. Therefore, the customer laughs or feels that he is the one who has said something funny. Sometimes it is the other way around and a hostess says *boke* while a customer replies *tsukkomi*. Even if the customer's *tsukkomi* is harsh towards the hostess, the hostess has to laugh or play *tsukkomi/boke* again. In these ways, customers feel that they entertain hostesses.

Mika is good at *tsukkomi*. She rhythmically makes funny-short replies, which often make customers and other hostesses laugh. Therefore, she seems to be speaking frequently. In reality, however, I did not see her speaking for a long time at any point. She is actually a competent and proactive listener. One day in March, Akasaka-san, a man in his 60s, came to Club Mizuno for the first time in a few months. Mika sat next to me and started preparing drinks. Akasaka-san said to Mika, 'Long time no see! You've got even more beautiful, haven't you?' She could have said 'thank you' in a cute voice as many hostesses usually do, but instead she cheerfully replied, 'Ah,

your eyesight must have got worse?' Akasaka-san laughed and said, 'Yes, you're right! How did you know?!' After that, the hostesses started asking questions to get to know him better.

Another day in April, Mika sat at the table of Togashi-san, a man in his 60s. In the middle of the conversation, he commented, 'Today, there are only a few customers in the club, it is kind of difficult for me to leave.' Tsukasa, a *tantō* hostess in her 40s, asked us, 'Was yesterday like this too?' Mika answered, 'Yesterday, there were some more customers over there (pointing at a part of the room). But today, Togashi-san reserved all of Club Mizuno, didn't you know?!' This comment made everyone laugh a lot, especially Togashi-san because it playfully suggested he was a rich man. Mika quickly turned a boring conversation into a funny interaction. I saw many customers enjoying these small, witty and unexpected replies that Mika offered.

Sayuri-mama is a professional at *tsukkomi* too. One day in February, Iwata-san, a man in his 70s, visited Club Mizuno with his three junior employees. Reina, a middle-ranking hostess in her late 30s, sat next to Iwata-san. She was very drunk, and although she tried to talk with Iwata-san, she was unnecessarily loud and the upper part of her body was swaying. A bit later Sayuri-mama joined us. Iwata-san jokingly said to her, 'If you keep having this kind of animal (Reina), the club will get into trouble in the future'. Sayuri-mama replied, 'Yes, after 12 o'clock, this place turns into a zoo'. Iwata-san laughed. His comment could have been seen either as a complaint or a joke. Regardless of his intention, Sayuri-mama never becomes apologetic and always turns a situation to a fun conversation.

One day in April, Sayuri-mama replied to a customer with an unexpected response, and smoothed the flow of a conversation. I had brought my friend Maro-san, a man in his 30s who helped me to get the hostess job to the club. In the middle of the conversation, Sayuri-mama came to our table and they exchanged business cards. She was surprised by his name as it is rare and sounds like a person from the *Heian* period (794 AD – 1185). She said, 'So, can you play *kemari*?' (a type of football played by courtiers in the *Heian* period). This unexpected comment made him laugh. He replied, 'Yes, I do. Did you know that it is more difficult than football because they play it in wooden shoes.' Everyone laughed. The flow of conversation changed.

Hostesses' *tsukkomi* comprises two processes; first, understanding and predicting the flow of a conversation: second, diverting it. Hostesses improve their 'projectability', which refers to the ability to prefigure possible trajectories of action or flow of conversation, which allows communicators to adjust coordinated action in the following moment (Hayashi 2004).

'Projectability' explains a part of the *tsukkomi* mechanism. However, the core of *tsukkomi* is to twist a predicted conversation, and this diverting should not be offensive or extremely out-of-context, but should be playful, which requires skill in *kūki o yomu* too.

Hostesses' witty and quick *tsukkomi* is funny because it contains something diverted or unexpected. Mizuno Keiya (2014:2492), a self-help writer on romantic relationships, defines *tsukkomi* as responding with unexpected replies. This is an interesting statement because this implies including an element that is originally defined as a part of *boke*. In Manzai (Japanese stand-up comedy), *boke* is defined as making out-of-context statements, avoiding immediate relevance and/or, engaging in cognitive misunderstandings, whereas *tsukkomi* means responding in a sharp and witty way to enhance or complete *boke* humour, making sense of *boke* statements, or turning a diverted conversation to an everyday meaning (Abe 2005; Ōshima 2006; Stocker 2006; Tsutsumi 2011). *Tsukkomi* for hostesses consists of a *boke* aspect, while in Manzai comedians show a clear line between *boke* and *tsukkomi*. For example, Mika's response 'I know, Togashi-san reserved the entire Club Mizuno, didn't you?!' consists both aspects; a witty and quick response (*tsukkomi*) and an out-of-context remark (*boke*). Sayuri-mama's 'So, could you play *kemari*?' also involves two facets; a *boke* which avoids immediate relevance and a *tsukkomi* by completing the humour of Maro-san's name. Maro-san's continued talk about *kemari* could be seen as an extra *boke*. Hostesses' *tsukkomi* reveals that in a real conversation, the line between *tsukkomi* and *boke* could be blurred. This finding discloses that hostesses are not only *tsukkomi* masters, as Mizuno (2014:2492) mentions, but also masters of *boke*. Katsumata-san, a regular in his 50s, once said to me that experienced hostesses always '*tsukkonde kuru*' (doing *tsukkomi*), therefore customers can have fun conversations, but that is not the case for novice hostesses. His comment indicates that hostesses who are simply subservient and unplayful are boring, a point overlooked by Alison's research (1994). An unexpected witty reply is a strong weapon to entertain customers.

While talking about *shimoneta* (sexual talk), hostesses also offer witty and playful comments. For example, Anna, a middle-ranking hostess in her 30s, was talking with Maejima-san, a regular customer in his 60s. They were recalling a night when they had a fun time. Maejima-san said, 'Do you remember the night?! You (Anna) and Yuri (another hostess) came to my hotel room, ordered a lot of food and drink, ate everything, and then left my room taking all the amenities!' We laughed. Maejima-san continuously teased Anna, saying, 'When we had a date another day, you were wet, right?' (being sexually aroused). Anna replied, 'You had a hard-on too!' Maejima-san was

enjoying teasing her, and Anna read that what he wanted was to show their intimate relationship as well as to be teased back. In order to tease him back, *tsukkomi* was needed. A novice hostess would say, 'We haven't had a date. Let's go for a date!' or 'Eh?! I wasn't wet!', which would be boring.

Matsuda (2008:193–194), who also worked as a hostess during her fieldwork in Ginza, finds this type of wordplay and calls it '*renai gokko*'. In one of her examples, coming to the club after *dōhan*, a hostess quickly changed her clothes in the toilet. Her customer said to her, 'If I had known that you can change your dress so fast, we could have rested in the hotel longer!' The other hostess replied to the customer, 'Yes, you guys smell the same.' (*tsukkomi*), then the first hostess responded, 'You caught us!' (*tsukkomi/boke*). Matsuda argues that this is one of the hostesses' communication strategies to attract customers.

I found that *shimoneta,* as well as *shimoneta*-related *tsukkomi* or teasing back, are especially important for both customers and hostesses. Allison (1994:181–184) argues that sexual talk such as teasing about the size of breasts of hostess creates gender by allowing females to become objects and males become subjects in order to pleasurably dominate. This type of talk degrades women but not men, and generates a gender imbalance which inflates the male ego, enhances men's sexuality and unites them, if they are a group, as men. (Allison's ethnography does not describe how hostesses respond to sexual talk.) On the other hand, in Matsuda's example of *shimoneta*, a different mechanism builds men's sexuality. The customer first indicates their sexual intimacy, which induces romantic bargaining interaction with the hostess. Because the hostess approves his words, he is able to prove two aspects; their close relationship and his sexual ability. With these two declarations, he emphasises his heterosexuality and maleness in front of others without degrading the hostess. I call the former type of sexual talk 'degrading sexual-talk' while the latter 'playful sexual-talk'.

In the case of Anna, because of her *tsukkomi* teasing, she was able to change a type of sexual talk from 'degrading sexual-talk' to 'playful sexual-talk'. When Maejima-san said, 'You were wet, right?', he connoted female sexuality and made Anna an object. He did not judge or devalue her, but mentioned only her body and not his body or sexuality, which generated gender imbalance. By teasing her, he attempted to dominate her as a man. However, Anna alluding to his sexuality by deploying *tsukkomi*, 'You had a hard-on too!' also made him an object, while satisfying him by referring to their sexual relation and his sexual ability. Through changing the flow of conversation,

she changed the relation with Maejima-san, not subordinating herself but raising her position as being smart enough to challenge him. If she said, 'I was not wet', or simply laughed, she would stay in a subordinate position.

In both types of sexual-talk, customers emphasise their masculinity, therefore they are crucial for them. Whereas, 'playful sexual-talk' is especially important for hostesses because this enables a customer to feel that he has good chemistry with hostesses, which makes him come back to the club.

Tsukkomi and *boke* (including *shimoneta*) have the power to enliven the atmosphere. There is another way to do this; showing exaggerated facial and bodily expressions. Too much exaggeration, however, would be considered over flattering, and might spoil the atmosphere. Therefore, a subtle adjustment is required. Tsukasa, Mika and Tani are all very good at this. I secretly called them 'reaction kings'.

Two different types of reaction kings exist in Club Mizuno; the confident one and the flatterer. Both work well. Tsukasa, a high-ranking hostess in her 40s, is a confident reaction king. Firstly, she has quite thick make-up and a gorgeous Ginza hairstyle, which make her reactions even more expressive. Secondly, she has a high clear voice. Moreover, she always smiles and laughs a lot. These details make her facial and bodily expressions flamboyant. Surprisingly, although she does not drink alcohol at all, she can become as cheerful as drunken customers and hostesses (she is exempted from drinking because she works only for her customers when she brings them to the club, and her customers know she does not drink alcohol). She clearly varies the amount of speaking depending on customers; however, she always leaves the same cheerful impression with her exaggerated reactions. She is not shy at all and very confident. Therefore, she is a confident reaction king.

One day in February, Tsukasa brought her customer Togashi-san, a man in his 60s. In the middle of the conversation, Togashi-san gave Tsukasa a small gift that he bought during his business trip, and started talking about the efficient system of booking train tickets that he used. I was wondering how Tsukasa would reply to this practical and boring topic. Tsukasa, however, put many exaggerated *aizuchi* such as 'Ehh!!' 'Wonderful!' or 'Useful!' In this way, he continued talking about the booking system.

Tani, a senior concierge, on the other hand, is a flattery reaction king. Whatever his customers say, he replies in exaggerated ways such as 'Hō!!' 'You are wonderful!' 'Wow, that would be

beyond me!' or 'I learnt a lot from you!' He stays in an ultimate subordinate position and uses extreme zealous listening. Novice, lower and middle-ranking hostesses also tend to show this type of reaction.

In conclusion, both *tsukkomi/boke* master and reaction king skills illustrate the importance of strategic responses for proactive listeners in entertaining customers.

3.2.5 Language illusion

Another way to attract customers is changing language styles, which allows hostesses to control intimacy. Hostesses use different types of language depending on the situation and the customer; these include '*keigo*' (honorific language), '*tamego/tameguchi*' (casual language), '*hōgen*' (local accent) and '*onna kotoba*' (women's language/speech). Because a listener talks, language use influences a listener's demeanour. Through moving from one language type to another, hostesses naturally manipulate the almost illusory impressions of themselves that they create, the atmosphere of the conversation and the process of creating intimacy.

After all, hostesses must know how to use honorific language as one of their basic skills. Hostesses very naturally use a high level of honorific language. For example, the standard level of honorific language used in a supermarket or in a company setting includes phrases like '*shitsurei shimasu*' (excuse me), '*arigatō gozaimasu*' (thank you very much) or '*sumimasen*' (I apologise for). Hostesses and members of staff in Ginza clubs use a higher level of politeness, such as saying '*goissho sasete itadakimasu*' (May I join you), '*omeni kakarete kouei desu*' (I am glad that I could see you), '*okuruma de okaeri ni narare masu ka*?' (Would you be going home by car?), '*mōshiwake gozaimasen*' (I deeply apologise for) or '*itterasshai mase*' (have a safe journey) etc. They never say '*okyaku*-san' (an honorific title for a customer) but rather '*okyaku*-sama' (a higher honorific title). I felt I was learning a new language. A higher level of honorific language indicates respect towards customers and is a constant reminder of the clear hierarchy between hostesses and customers, and even shows hostesses' pride in themselves as sophisticated and educated hostesses.

Hostesses usually employ honorific language with new customers, and later, depending on the situation and customer, they combine both honorific and casual language. They carefully check customers' information, such as age and occupation, and read the atmosphere – for example, whether a customer prefers a casual and friendly conversation or wants to show authority, or whether a customer is drunk or sober. For example, when I brought Maro-san, my male friend in

his early 30s, to the club, Aoi, an experienced and middle-ranking hostess in her late 30s, sat with us. Aoi conversed with Maro-san using honorific language at the beginning, but after 20 minutes she began to speak with him using casual language. There were two reasons: firstly, because she had come to know that Maro-san was younger than her; secondly, because she sensed that Maro-san preferred a relaxing and friendly form of interaction as he did not have much experience in Ginza clubs. Tsukasa, an experienced, high-ranking hostess in her 40s, always uses casual language when speaking with Shirakawa-san, a man in his 70s, regardless of their thirty-year age differences. Therefore, their relationship seems like that of intimate friends or a couple, although their hierarchy does not disappear. As Aoi and Tsukasa demonstrate, skilfully reducing excessive honorific language and politeness is more significant than avoiding the violation of a rule of politeness in a hostess club, as honorific language functions to create a psychological distance (Ide 1992; Maynard 1997:64). Maintaining an excessively polite form for a long time could even be considered a violation of an unwritten rule in a hostess club. Casual language allows hostesses to create a relaxing, friendly atmosphere, and to enhance intimacy.

However, using casual language as soon as possible is not always the right strategy. Sayuri-mama once intentionally postponed a chance to use casual language. She never uses casual language with new customers, and she takes time to move to using casual language, just as some people prefer to nurture their romantic relationship slowly. For instance, when Hashimoto-san – a new male customer in his 70s – came to Club Mizuno, Sayuri-mama asked him, 'What should I call you?' He answered, 'Please call me "Sei-*chan*"', which sounds very casual, friendly and intimate, because of the honorific '*chan*' added to the end of his nickname. She smiled and responded, 'I am too afraid to say it. I will call you "Sei-*chan*" when I get much closer to you.' Continuing to use honorific language can be done both to play with intimacy and to maintain a dignified, educated impression.

Speaking a local dialect increases affinity. One day I moved to a table with about 10 businesspersons from the Hakata and Shikoku areas (in the southern part of Japan). They were in their 50s to 70s and all wore suits. They were involved in *pachinko* (a Japanese gambling slot machine) business. This was a business meeting. Their *tantō* hostess was Akane, an experienced hostess in her 40s. She had a long-term and friendly hostess-customer relationship with them since she had worked as a hostess in Hakata. She spoke the Hakata/Kūshū dialect with them, even though she usually spoke with a Tokyo accent. The customers also spoke their dialects. I found that

speaking the Kyushū accent in the middle of Tokyo made the customers relaxed. On another day, I saw that a hostess from Hokkaidō used the Hokkaidō accent with her customers from Hokkaidō. In both cases, when hostesses and customers started speaking their dialects, the atmosphere became suddenly friendlier and less refined.

'Women's language' (*onna kotoba*) increases hostesses' femininity, affability and subordination. Kyōko, a high-ranking hostess in her 40s, often uses women's language, especially participles which people rarely hear outside clubs, such as '...*dawa*, ...*nanoyo*, ...*desutte*, ...*yone*'. For example, Maejima-san, a regular customer in his 60s, said to one hostess, 'Your underwear is exposed!' (*pantsu mieteru zo!*); Kyōko replied, 'It isn't exposed, she's *showing* it to you!' (*mieterun ja nai wayo, miseteru noyo!*) She mixed *ja nai* (casual language) and *wayo* and *noyo* (women's language), instead of using only casual language, which could be seen as impertinent. Women's language creates not only a feminine impression but also signals deference towards customers because women's language is seen as sweet, soft and cute, and therefore less threatening, or even powerless. McVeigh (1996) argues that cuteness merges femininity, meekness, powerlessness, cheerfulness and youthfulness etc., and being cute towards superiors is a way to win their favour and attention. This is because cuteness induces a sympathetic response or protective instinct in another, which generates affinity or closeness, although, at the same time, this cuteness mechanism constructs gendered relations which symbolise and enhance norms that privilege men over women. Kyōko created a friendly atmosphere while remaining in a less powerful female position by inserting women's language. Simply being friendly by using casual language might threaten the hierarchy. Therefore, for hostesses, women's language functions both to construct gender by making a feminine impression in a conversation and to maintain or strengthen a power relationship.

However, this does not explain other dimensions of women's language in hostess clubs. After I started working as a hostess, I used women's language both in the club and in my daily life, which made me think, 'Ah, I am becoming a hostess'. I realised that women's language is a part of hostesses' identity. Linguist Nakamura Momoko (2012:102–103, 116, 131, 135) argues that '*teyo*, *dawa*, *noyo*' language was first used by female students who were intellectual and from a higher class as their new identity against the gendered rules influenced by Confucianism, which schools re-imposed during the early Meiji era. However, this way of speaking was later labelled as a representation of unsophisticated, sexualised female students. Moreover, this speaking form

was eventually used to impose on women gendered national identities, especially as second citizens (men were the first citizens). In hostess clubs, women's language still maintains the aspects described by Nakamura: the identity of a sophisticated hostess, because women's language used to represent intellectual women's dignity; and the representation of femininity and subordination, because women's language was later used to construct gender relations.

Women's language has another function in a hostess club: it sometimes intensifies humour. For example, Mika frequently uses women's language, too. Her women's language, however, functions in two ways: either to increase her femininity, or to enhance a level of comedy due to her ability with humorous *tsukkomi*. The latter case arises because her women's language can be considered a part of *tsukkomi/boke* by the other party, or can function as a way of exaggerating her *tsukkomi/boke*. Therefore, her feminine language could be used to reinforce her humour, rather than enhance her femininity.

Different types of language enable hostesses to carry out impression management and intimacy control. Hostesses use *keigo* (honorific language) to display respect, to show an understanding of the hierarchy and to manifest their sophistication. They also manipulate casual language and local accents to create a friendly, casual atmosphere, and to increase familiarity. Hostesses use women's language and this works in multiple ways: creating gender; entertaining customers as a feminine figure; remaining in a less powerful position in order not to threaten the hierarchy; manifesting pride as a hostess and/or enhancing humour. Sociolinguist Rajend Mesthrie (2009:336) argues that the ability to adjust one's language depending on interlocutors and situations entails a (subconscious) understanding of the socio-political hierarchy. Hostesses acquire this ability as their most fundamental skill and play with this aspect in order to deepen attachment. Therefore, manipulating language is like mastering magic, creating an illusion that customers want to experience. Illusions, for customers, include the feeling of dominating the situation or of becoming intimate with hostesses, or an atmosphere in which customers can forget the reality of their work or life.

To entertain customers, hostesses hone individual skills such as *tsukkomi*, *boke*, exaggerated reactions and language strategies. However, although individuals' abilities are the key to amusing customers, hostesses also deploy teamwork listening to attract them. In the next section, I will describe the importance of teamwork.

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3.2.6 Teamwork listening

Teamwork listening underpins Ginza clubs' reputation for a high level of communication and entertainment. For example, hostesses frequently make eye contact with each other and laugh with one another. They ask questions not only of customers but also of other hostesses, such as 'Is Nanase also 150 cm?' or 'Have you been to many European countries?' In order to develop a conversation, they give fellow hostesses information about customers during a conversation, such as 'He used to have long hair!' or 'Do you know that Iwata-san has a secret talent?' They give *tsukkomi* or *boke* support to each other. Experienced and popular hostesses take care of all members at a table who are sitting together, and nurture the flow of the conversation.

Expressing enjoyment across the whole table is one service hostesses offer as a team. In March, I moved to a table with Hayashi-san, a man in his 70s. There were already five hostesses sitting there. When I joined the table, Emili, a lower-ranking hostess in her mid-20s, was being quizzed, for example being asked how many areas called '*ku*' exist in Tokyo. Emili performed as an uneducated hostess by articulating many *boke*. Other hostesses tried to ask her questions, laughed when she said *boke* and offered *tsukkomi*. I felt bored but smiled and laughed in order to show my enjoyment. Hayashi-san sometimes made comments on Emili's answers and several times lectured us based on his knowledge. He said, 'It is like I am teaching although I am paying. I should be entitled to be paid for my lecture!' Although he complained, I identified that he had a desire to teach. All of the hostesses at his table listened to his lecture attentively and performed like aspiring students. As a team, the hostesses created a classroom atmosphere.

As Emili demonstrated, performing different roles at a table is a type of teamwork conversation. One day, Emi, an experienced, middle-ranking hostess in her 40s, and I sat at a table for Nagai-san, a rough man in his 50s. He always wore brown coloured glasses and knitwear and used harsh language with everyone. He liked me when he came to the club on a prior occasion, so I sat next to him. He asked me if I was really a student at the University of Cambridge. I said I could show him my student card. I brought out several cards, such as my university card, an old and new rail discount card, and my UK residence card. He compared my pictures and said, 'This one is ugly. This one is so so. This one is pretty! That's the quality I want to date. Maybe you should change your hairstyle to like it is in this picture.' Next, he pointed out my small bag, saying 'Huh? What do you have here?!' He suddenly grabbed my small bag and I tried to get it back. Nagai-san also complained that he could smell garlic, saying to me in a harsh way, 'It must be

you! What did you eat for dinner?!' I replied to him, 'Soft-shelled turtle!' (*suppon*!) It is not me!'
(Later, Tani and Emi confessed that both had eaten something with garlic.) Seeing these
conversations, Emi smiled and said things like: 'You guys look like a schoolboy teasing a girl he
likes!' Nagai-san answered, 'Ah? It is not like that!'. Emi was clearly performing a supporting role
for me and did not become self-assertive. I had to be the one who took on the main hostess' role.
Honestly, I felt a bit nervous dealing with Nagai-san because of his bossy attitude and rough
manner of speaking. However, the presence of Emi made me relieved. Teamwork conversation
allows hostesses to impersonate different roles through reading customers' interests, and to help
each other in order to offer customers the best possible time.

Teamwork listening enables hostesses to implement an important policy: 'never leave
customers alone'. In March, Maejima-san, a regular customer in his 60s, brought Yoshida-san, his
work colleague in his 60s, to the club. They collaborated at some points in their business and there
seemed to be no hierarchy between them. Mio, an experienced, low-ranking hostess, and I sat at
their table. Soon, Kyōko, the No.1 hostess, joined. Maejima-san proudly introduced Kyōko to
Yoshida-san as his *tantō* hostess. In the beginning, everyone talked together. Yoshida-san was
very chatty and cheerful. As time went by, Maejima-san, Kyōko and Mio started talking among
themselves. Sayuri-mama joined, and the circle became one again; but soon they conversed among
themselves, leaving Yoshida-san alone. I realised that it must be my job to converse with him. I
remembered that at the beginning of our conversation, he talked about brushing teeth and
cleanliness of the mouth, which is related to his job. I asked questions, such as: 'Is it true that
habits of brushing teeth and Alzheimer's correlate with each other?' He then became chatty again.
The policy of never leaving customers alone is always achieved by hostesses' teamwork listening.

Teamwork listening demonstrates that a conversation in a hostess club is not always dyadic,
it can involve a three-person, four-person, or even a bigger group, conversation. Therefore,
hostesses have to acquire cooperative and supportive abilities, in addition to individual
communication skills[xvii]. Collaborating makes it easier to show a lively and fun atmosphere. This
word – *moriagaru* – is an important concept for understanding hostess club culture, and
communication in general in Japan. In the next section, I introduce this concept and analyse how
hostesses create this atmosphere.

[xvii] Unlike hostess clubs, *kyabakura* offers one-to-one interaction at a table.

3.3 Who is responsible for a *moriagaru* conversation?

3.3.1 A real *moriagaru* atmosphere

Around 9.30 to 10 pm, Club Mizuno starts livening up. The voices of members of staff are relatively loud, calling out '*irasshhaimase*!' (welcome!) and '*Donperi itadakimashita*!' (We have received an order for a bottle of Dom Pérignon!). The sounds of ice and of glasses chinking, the voices of customers and the laughter of hostesses fill the room. The smell of perfume spreads throughout the club. Customers and hostesses occupy most of the spaces, and male concierges elegantly glide around the club. No one can hear the jazz background music anymore. Club Mizuno is now busy and vitalised. This situation is called '*moriagaru*'.

Moriagaru/moriageru is a significant concept for understanding club culture, and communication generally in Japan. *Moriagaru* and *moriageru* are corresponding intransitive and transitive verbs, meaning a feeling, atmosphere or conversation becomes boisterous, lively or fun. This is one of the criteria for evaluating if a club or conversation is successful.

In order to understand '*moriagaru/moriageru*' in the context of Ginza clubs, I asked three hostesses the questions: 'Could you please explain the conditions necessary for *moriagaru* in a club?' and 'Could you please express the meaning of *moriagaru* in the case of a club without using the word itself?' One hostess explained that, as an observer, it would look like everyone is enjoying talking, the conversation is noisy, or it is like a party. If she expresses *moriagaru* in front of her customers, she would say, 'I feel like this isn't work!' or 'We can talk till the morning'. The two other hostesses said that *moriagaru* means something that seems to be fun (*tanoshisō*), everyone is laughing and the volume in the room is becoming loud. Enjoyment, fun, laughter and noisiness are essential components of *moriagaru* in Ginza clubs.

Moriagaru is also applied to space and atmosphere (*fun'iki*). Tani told me, 'It is important to make the space (the main room) and its atmosphere seem to be *moriagatteiru* (a present progressive form of *moriagaru*). Hiring a variety of hostesses means, of course, customers can find a favourite hostess, but it also fills the space. Calling out phrases such as '*irasshaimase*' (welcome) 'Mr A *irasshaimashita*' (welcome to Mr A) is done to make important customers feel special, as well as to avoid silence in a club. It is all a theatrical production (*enshutsu*) to create a lively and fun atmosphere for customers. Customers tend to come back to a busy, crowded and lively club.' Concierges get worried if a table or the main room becomes silent. When a manager

from a different club came to Club Mizuno with his customer, that customer said to the manager, 'Your club seems to be very popular these days'. He responded: 'I am busy making my club seem busy'. Busyness, crowdedness and noisiness are the signs of *moriagaru*. Silence and emptiness are the opposite of *moriagaru*.

On 5 April 2018, I encountered a real *moriagaru* atmosphere in Club Mizuno. While I was sitting at the table of Katsumata-san, a regular customer in his 50s, and Murata-san, an employee of Katsumata-san's company in his 40s, suddenly Takamizawa-san, a famous TV celebrity in his 70s, and his 30 guests, who were all men wearing suits, showed up. Leaving one hostess at every table, all other hostesses including me were called to sit between these customers. There was, however, physically no free space for hostesses, therefore Takamizawa-san scolded, 'We do not need hostesses!' Leaving only Sayuri-mama and Reina who persisted in staying, other hostesses went back to the previous tables.

I went back to Murata-san's seat, saying, 'I am back!' and he said, 'Welcome'. At this point, Club Mizuno became very busy and noisy. Most of the seats were taken by customers. The atmosphere of the whole club became lively. Our table was just opposite that of Takamizawa-san and his 30 guests, so everyone had to raise their voice, which made us thirsty, so we drank more. We had to lean forward to listen to others, which made everyone physically closer. People's laughter was contagious, making others smile and laugh. Takamizawa-san and his guests became a target to be observed by other customers. Murata-san told me, 'She has already drunk three glass of beer with Takamizawa-san. It is so amazing. I respect her.' We kept conversing about Takamizawa-san as a *neta*.

Soon, I was called to move to another table where two men in their 60s had just arrived. With their arrival, Club Mizuno was completely full. This was the first and last time I saw the club full. (Popular clubs often become full and customers wait for seats.) At this table, we also talked very loudly and leaned forward to each other, otherwise, we would not have been able to converse; this gave me a sore throat the next morning.

After 20 minutes, Takamizawa-san and his 30 guests left the club. Takamizawa-san, who was drunk, passed behind me to leave the club. He suddenly touched my shoulders with his hands, saying 'Look this!! I like her back, haha'. I just laughed. His guests also smiled. Takamizawa-san smiled and left the club.

Two customers whom I was conversing with also left immediately after Takamizawa-san. I moved back to Murata-san's seat. After these departures, Club Mizuno became very quiet. Even though half of the seats were still occupied by customers, I felt the room was very empty.

Why is *moriagaru* so important? For clubs, this indicates a successful impression, and so it attracts customers. For hostesses and customers, there are several possible answers. Firstly, it is because a *moriagaru* conversation strengthens affinity and trust. In such a conversation, communicators share time, space, laughter, happiness and satisfaction, which bring a feeling of being on the same wavelength and creates an expectation of understanding each other. This phenomenon is called 'similarity law' (A Dictionary of psychology online, accessed August 2019). Secondly, the *moriagatteiru* atmosphere provides the opportunity for customers to forget reality and to reduce stress through laughing or smiling. A lot of hostesses told me that they want to make customers smile, to let them escape from a tough reality, even for a few hours, and to empower them to go back to work again. Sociologists Kawabata Tomoko (1998:166) and Allison (1994:53) also reveal this aspect. When Kawabata worked as a hostess, she was told by a manager that she should avoid topics such as family life or work. Hostess clubs should be a place to be separated from work, home and reality. Thirdly, the *moriagatteiru* conversation offers the chance for customers to dominate a situation, which makes them satisfied, feel appreciated or feel a sense of 'maleness'. How do they dominate and what makes them satisfied in such a conversation? What do hostesses contribute to it? In the following section, I will discuss how hostesses and customers understand *moriagaru* conversation and how they contribute to it differently.

3.3.2 Division of labour in *moriagaru* conversation

Both hostesses and some of their male clients realise their roles in creating a *moriagaru* conversation, by having different strategies for doing so. Hostesses contribute to *moriagaru* work at a table both as a team and as individuals. As a group, it is easier to occupy space, to create the impression of a crowd, to make noise and to find topics to talk about to fill the silence. They perform the role of being entertained by the customers as a whole table. At an individual level, they smile, laugh, ask questions, raise topics of conversation, make funny *tsukkomi* or *boke*, tease or be teased, and keep up a conversation without holding the floor. They sometimes share their own private stories and personal opinions in a very brief manner. Hostesses clearly strive for an enlivened situation by means of cooperation *and* their individual abilities, especially as listeners.

On the other hand, customers tend to describe that *moriageru* is men's work. They tend to introduce their stories in funny ways, expressing their uniqueness by, for example, showing off their physical features, using funny language or making jokes. When others are entertained, they feel a sense of satisfaction. They enact these roles and hold the spotlight. For example, Katsumata-san, a regular in his 50s who owns his own sweet retail company, told me: 'Hostesses' work is just smiling and doing *aizuchi*, which is easy. I am always the one who speaks and perform *moriageru*. You guys (his juniors) should hone this kind of skill more!' He clearly believes he is in charge of speaking and of a *moriagaru* conversation. Similarly, one day in February, I sat next to Baba-san, a bald man in his 60s. He talked a lot and frequently made jokes, which definitely made the conversation *moriagaru*. Tani introduced me and my research to him. Baba-san said: 'For a hostess, just listening would be enough, but men have to say something to *moriageru*'. Although he, as a customer, has superiority over hostesses, he thinks he is responsible for *moriageru* work. As these two customers suggest, some customers think that hostesses do not contribute to a *moriagaru* conversation, but that customers themselves are in charge of a lively conversation and making others laugh.

Male customers' conversational and emotional work in hostess clubs has been pointed out by Gagné Nana Okura. She (2010) describes different types of work which male regulars carry out. First, they mediate between hostesses and an owner Mama-san. For example, when Mama-san came to join a table and completely changed a topic of the talk, or she criticised hostesses' hair or attire in front of customers, the customers acknowledge Mama-san while attempting to save face for the hostesses in order to mitigate the tension. Second, regulars collaborate with hostesses to create a fun atmosphere to entertain the regulars' guests. Third, male clients often flatter or praise Mama-san. Therefore, she argues that although people often focus on hostesses' emotional labour, male customers also invest their energy in this type of work for hostesses. Male customers' *moriageru* work can overlap with the second point Gagné mentions. However, she neither describes detailed examples nor develops an analysis of this point, but rather focuses on the first point, especially conversations which become ambivalent and uncomfortable. Moreover, customers often get involved in *moriageru* work, even when they come to clubs alone.

How, then, do hostesses and customers contribute to the creation of a *moriagaru* conversation in reality? The following example demonstrates that a hostess clearly carried out *moriageru* work, but a customer perceived it as his own doing. One day in March, Tachibana-san, a regular in his

70s, brought with him three guests. He was already drunk and looked grumpy. Aoi, an experienced middle-ranking hostess in her late 30s, and I sat next to him. Somehow our conversation went to Tachibana-san's love story. He told how a hostess invited him to enter her room. He also said that he now has his own rule not to have any mistresses anymore. After listening to this, Aoi responded to him (both as a listener and speaker): "I also have a rule. I impose a rule on a potential boyfriend that when he arrives at my accommodation, he has to take off all his clothes at the entrance." Tachibana-san and I laughed loudly. The conversation naturally turned to *shimoneta*. Tachibana-san confessed that he has "big breasts". He showed his chest to us and we touched him and laughed. He said, "They are big, aren't they?" Aoi replied to him (both as a listener and speaker), "Yes. I always wanted to gather a man's boobs like this and do 'bū'!! (an onomatopoeic word to blow)", miming grabbing breasts in both her hands, gathering them together and strongly blowing. This *boke* response to Tachibana-san caused him and me to burst out laughing. He continued to talk about his past love stories. He seemed to be really enjoying himself and laughed a lot. Part way through, interestingly, he said to us: "You can enjoy talking with me without getting bored, right? There is no hostess who can satisfy me these days, so I converse with hostesses to make them have fun!" and he laughed. Aoi and I agreed with him and praised him. However, I felt conflicted. I thought Aoi's small talk/response and *boke* reply were the key to making the conversation *moriagaru*. We mainly performed the role of submissive and supportive listeners, did not hold the floor, and smiled and laughed a lot. In these ways, we put on an air of being entertained by male customers, regardless of our true feelings. Therefore, at least this *moriagaru* conversation technically could be seen as a mutual endeavour, but Tachibana-san thought it was his achievement alone.

I found that *moriageru* can be a type of desire for customers, not simply a responsibility. This desire is the feeling that 'I' want to be the one who makes people laugh, enjoy themselves and be surprised. Many customers subconsciously have this desire. For example, Matsuoka-san, a man in his 80s, is one of them. He wore a good quality suit and hat. His voice was very low, and he spoke very slowly. Therefore, he evoked the atmosphere of a 'Godfather'. He arrived at Club Mizuno for the first time in several months. He did not ignore hostesses' talk, however, he was relatively quiet compared to other customers. Therefore, hostesses carefully asked him questions and waited for him to react. Izumi-san helped us. She was a female member of staff at a luxury sushi restaurant in Ginza, in her 30s, and wore a black *kimono*. She often converses with Matsuoka-san in the

restaurant, so Matsumoto-san brought her to the club although it was during her working hours in the restaurant. (In the end, Sayuri-mama whispered to Izumi-san, 'I am sorry for making you stay here for a long time when you should have gone back to the restaurant.' She smiled and replied, 'It's ok. He spent so much (money) in the restaurant tonight'.) Matsumoto-san's comments to Izumi-san were always slightly cold and harsh, but this was because they had a close relationship. Once one of the hostesses was called to move, she said, 'Thank you for sharing your drink' as usual with a toast. Matsuoka-san said, '*Hai, sainara*' (oh, goodbye), which is an old-fashioned way of saying this. This made all of the hostesses laugh. I laughed, and said *tsukkomi*, '*Sainara tte!*' (What kind of goodbye is that!). Matumoto-san finally laughed, and his face looked happy. He said, 'Because it is really goodbye, right?' I finally understood that he had a desire to *moriageru* and his cold words towards Izumi-san and the hostess were *boke*. Therefore, when he said something harsh to Izumi-san again, I did *tsukkomi*, 'You are harsh!' (*tsumetāi!*). He said, 'Am I?' and laughed. We also talked about his experience in London and Paris. He said he wanted to go to Paris again but not to London. I laughed again, which made him smile again. He laughed when I laughed, which indicated his hidden desire to *moriageru*. This example shows the presence of a desire for *moriageru*, and the fact that hostesses help male clients to fulfil their *moriageru* desires.

Hostesses tend to take on the role of supportive listeners and customers tend to become self-oriented speakers. One customer acknowledged hostesses' listening as a female speciality. Kashiwabara-san, a man in his 70s, said to me: 'The common feature of club Mamas is having strong maternal affection/motherly love (*bosei ai*). This maternal affection is expressed by Mamas through being "a good listener". They listen to men's grumbles very well. Without that maternal affection, they wouldn't be able to. However, although there is a common base of maternal affection, they have different ways of expressing that they are listening, like her for example, or her [pointing out different hostesses in the club].' Kashiwabara-san linked maternal characteristics and listening. Comparing Japanese and American women's and men's role models, Yamada (1997:125) discusses that a nurturing mother is a powerful role model in Japan, and this maternal role model who uses *sasshi* (surmises) to take care of others' feelings can be found at the core of the Japanese communication, which she calls a listener-responsible style. Kashiwabara-san's idealisation of the motherly listener is identical to Yamada's concept. However, although Yamada argues that this is the ideal communicator for everyone, in a hostess club context, being a motherly listener is required only of women.

This tendency, whereby women become other-oriented listeners and men dominate by speaking, happens outside hostess clubs too. Anthropologist Kondo Dorinne (1990:296–298), for instance, observes that women were required to be 'appreciative audiences and erotic objects' in a conversation in a small confectionery factory. In the end-of-the-year drinking party, Ōhara-san, the elder male head of the factory, sat down at the table of female part-timers and regaled them with his jokes and discussion of his sexual prowess. He said, 'My wife is no good anymore' and continued talking. Hamada-san, a middle-age female part-time employee, asked him, 'Which do you like better, women or *sake*?' He answered, 'I like *sake*, but I love women!' and clapped them on the shoulders. Kondo states that the women, including herself, naturally served as an appreciative audience and functioned as the supportive backdrop for the man to reinforce his sense of masculinity, which marginalised the women themselves from the central masculine work identity, while creating an indispensable position that they could enact positively. She argues that without the women's presence, the power of the masculine story would be attenuated. This mechanism is the same as that at work in the examples of Tachibana-san and Matsumoto-san[xviii].

All three examples show that, in the male-dominated context, women tend to become attentive listeners and men are prone to becoming speakers, and both sides collaborate to fulfil a conversation. Linguist Itakura Hiroko (2004; 2001) and Sociologist Ehara Yumiko *et al*. (1984) also find a dominance of male students over female students and conclude that male dominance is jointly constructed. For instance, Itakura (2004) investigates eight Japanese students' dyad conversations using both quantitative and qualitative methods, featuring two types of dominance: 'sequential dominance' (controlling the other speaker and gaining complying actions or responses) and 'participatory dominance' (controlling the other speaker's participation such as by interrupting, overlapping and offering completion). She concludes that the quantitative analysis did not show gender dominance, while the qualitative analysis in three dyads indicated strong self-oriented attitudes of male speakers, such as storytelling, claiming expertise and not showing interest. As a consequence of this tendency, the female speakers were forced to show other-oriented conversational behaviour, such as asking questions to encourage male speakers to talk and

[xviii] In English-speaking contexts, it is also argued that while in the public sphere men tend to engage in story-telling, joking or imparting information, rather than supporting others to speak (Coates 1997: 120–125; Maltz and Borker 1982; Tannen 1990:77, 215), and that women tend to take on the role of listener more than men in mixed-gender conversation (Coates 2004:117). These analyses also suggest the presence of male dominance in conversation, and women's subordinate positions (see more details in Chapter 1).

empathising with male speakers' opinions. Itakura concluded that this was a consequence of collaborative actions. This result helps in understanding the men's self-oriented *moriagaru*/*moriageru* interaction and women's other-oriented *moriageru* behaviour in the previous examples.

However, what would happen if women clearly had power over men? Host clubs are a place where male hosts provide a fun conversation and female customers buy drinks and can be at the top of the hierarchy at a table. Anthropologist Takeyama Akiko (2005; 2016:75) investigates a host club in Tokyo, describing hosts' communication as flattering, flirting, joking, telling exaggerated stories and encouraging clients to drink in order to cultivate romantic relationships with customers. I also observed two host clubs in Shinjuku, Tokyo. Like hostesses, hosts, who are in their 20s and 30s, repeatedly put female clients at the centre of the conversation, reading their emotions and asking them questions. However, I found conversational differences between hostesses in Ginza and hosts in Shinjuku. Firstly, the hosts tried to become not only an attentive listener but also a funny speaker as much as possible, therefore they tended to tell funny stories or exaggerated experiences in relatively short form, and to keep the conversational ball rolling. Hosts are obviously entertainers as Takeyama (2016) finds that they call themselves professional entertainers. Secondly, the hosts tried to *moriagaru* themselves first by drinking a lot, showing excitement by speaking loudly; as a result, they were able to *moriageru* others. Hostesses also use this method, such as smiling or enthusiastically asking questions, but they also combine it with a reserved and respectful attitude. When it comes to long-term relationships with hosts, Takeyama (2005:206) argues that female customers seek sensitive and attentive men and attempt to liberate themselves from the Japanese patriarchal system, while also still wanting domineering men, which consequently reinforces gender hierarchy in host clubs. One veteran host comments that 'even though women may appear to have greater power over hosts at the beginning of a relationship, they are eventually undermined', especially when the female customers have fallen in love with the hosts. Sociologist Iino Tomoko (2010) also interviewed hosts and reported one of their comments on the importance of keeping a superior or dominant position towards female customers. As Takeyama's and Iino's research reflects, female customers could be powerful on the surface while their relationships with hosts could overturn as time passes. Therefore, even in conversations,

unlike hostesses, hosts might be able to become, or to be expected to become, a somewhat dominant speaker and of being lively in order to *moriageru* [xix].

A similar strategy (being jolly in order to entertain others) is employed by male students. Sakari Mesimäki's (2017) observation of a university hip-hop club shows that male members in their teens and 20s feel responsible for the *moriagatteiru* atmosphere, therefore, like hosts, they tend to drink excessively to show their craziness, pull hilarious pranks, engage in vulgar or sexual joking behaviour, shout, clap hands, break things or rules, and excitedly watch and perform dances. Although Mesimäki refers to these types of behaviour as '*moriageru*' instead of '*moriagaru*', it seems that what he is observing is the male students making themselves *moriagaru* first, which eventually *moriageru* others and ensures they are visible to, and dominate, others. Those who are good at this behaviour stand out among other male and female members and are considered more masculine than other males.

A common result among all of the examples – the customers in Ginza, the senior male employee in the factory, the hosts in Shinjuku and the male students in the hip-hop club – is that the more men succeed in doing *moriageru*, the more they dominate a situation, although they have different strategies. Customers in Ginza clubs, who were usually over 50, and the man in the factory, did not make themselves *moriagaru* first but tried to *moriageru* others through speaking and holding the floor, while the young hosts and male members in a hip-hop club tended to display their enthusiastic attitudes first, and, in this way, they *moriageru* others. In either way, they stood out among others, dominated the situation and emphasised their masculinity. They probably tended to forget the fact that their *moriageru/moriagaru* performances were underpinned by two types of help: that of female listeners or audiences, who were supportive, and a certain amount of alcohol, which was invigorating.

The common result suggests the presence of a 'gendered division of labour' in conversation. Sociolinguist Pamela M. Fishman (1980) analysed couples' conversations (professional-oriented and English speakers) at home and revealed the presence of a division of labour in conversation which renders men in a position of power and women in a position of powerlessness. Women tend

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[xix] In English contexts, linguists reveal cases where gender affects a conversation more than occupational status. For instance, linguist Candace West (1998) found that male doctors regularly interrupt their patients while female doctors are interrupted by their white and male patients, which suggests that gender seems to overrule status. Linguist Nicola Woods (1989) investigates three conversations between employees with different statuses. Although work status influenced floor-holding, men tend to dominate regardless of their position even with a female boss.

to ask questions and give minimal responses, such as 'yeah' and 'huh', in order to sustain a conversation but men do not do so as frequently. Men tend to talk and dominate interaction while women are expected to be 'good listeners'. Fishman named these women's conversational styles 'interactional shitwork'. Hostesses' *moriageru*/*moriagaru* work can also be categorised into this work. Hostesses probably presuppose their gendered role in interaction and reproduce the role within clubs. Therefore, especially in the case of *moriagaru* conversation in a hostess club, the division is clearly divided and expected by all of the actors. Philosopher Judith Butler (1988) offers an important idea that actions/acts do not arise from gender; rather, choosing and repeating a certain type of performance constitutes gender. Hostesses strategically select the role of attentive and supportive listener and repeat it, which eventually constructs their femininity and reproduces the division of labour in conversation.

Based on the above discussion, I want to propose three findings regarding listening and interaction. Firstly, in hostess clubs, hostesses perform the role of a supportive listener, which eventually helps male clients to rebuild their sense of dominance or maleness by *moriagaru* speaking. Allison (1994) suggests that male customers enhance or rebuild their masculinity through flirting, being flirted with or experiencing group male-bonding. However, even in ordinary, non-sexual or non-romantic conversations, the enhancement of manliness takes place. Repeating this type of conversation reproduces the gendered division of labour in interaction. As other examples and research show, men probably exercise their dominance in everyday small conversations outside of clubs, something that Zimmerman and West (1975) point out.

Secondly, despite the fact that hostesses' listening reinforces the division of labour in interaction, their listening also functions as 'an interactional weapon of the weak' because they can make money through this type of listening. By such listening, hostesses avoid threatening clients, entertain clients, control intimacy, make customers satisfied and win their trust, which follows the same logic as performing zealous listening (see in Chapter 2). This brings money, connections or protection for hostesses.

Hostesses' listening as an interactional weapon brings the other advantage for people in an addressee's/receiver's position. Goffman (1990:18–20) describes that in interactions, an audience calculates the validity of governable aspects of the expressions of an actor, based on ungovernable aspects of the expressions of an actor. The actor is only aware of the mainstream that she/he thinks they are displaying, while the audience witnesses both sides. The audience's detective skill is

always better than the actor's manipulation of behaviour. Therefore, a fundamental asymmetry in communication emerges, and the audience is likely to have the advantage over the actor as regards understanding the situation. This Goffman's discussion shows the advantage of staying in an addressee's position. Hostesses also have an advantage in regard to understanding the situation and the flow of the conversation, by staying in the listener position, therefore their listening is also an interactional 'weapon' [xxii].

Thirdly, male dominance in *moriagaru* conversation discloses a contradiction regarding the idea that the Japanese consider an ideal communicator to be a good listener. Compared to American conversation, Yamada (1997:50) says that an ideal communicator for the Japanese is a listener who cares about others and about group dynamics, rather than a speaker who asserts their independence. However, my observation and analysis indicate that in hostess club contexts, men tend to idealise a good communicator as a competent speaker who can show their dominance, and women are still expected to be competent listeners.

Thus far, I have demonstrated how hostesses and customers create the *moriagatteiru* atmosphere, and I have discussed the presence of a division of labour in interaction. Hostesses offer *moriageru* listening as a service, while customers perform *moriageru* speaking. In this way, customers enhance their sense of dominance or maleness or feel recognised or appreciated. *Moriagaru* work, as well as the gendered division of labour in interaction in a hostess club, are the result of their collaborative work. However, hostesses' subordinated, gendered listening does not fully explain the meaning of their listening. Through such listening, hostesses win customers' favour and trust, and eventually gain money, connections or protection etc. Furthermore, by staying as listeners, they are likely to gain more information and a better understanding of a situation. Therefore their listening is 'an interactional weapon of the weak'.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated hostesses' listening as an interactional weapon of the weak and I have discussed the gendered division of labour in interaction. Hostesses often stay in a

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[xxii] In a different field, deciphering a mechanism of the *Yagyū Shinkage* school of swordsmanship, scientist Shimizu Hiroshi (1996:65–66) similarly explains that a type of sword technique in the school first allows an opponent to move freely in order to project the opponent's intention, which enables them to adjust her/his psychological wavelength to the opponent and to read the timing correctly to win. Hostesses use the same trick to become accomplished listeners.

listener position and allow customers to stay as the central figure in a conversation. Hostesses actively ask questions, control their self-assertiveness, never give up on making a comment or reply, read the atmosphere, provide a witty *tsukkomi* and *boke*, display exaggerated reactions, change language use and collaborate with their colleagues to make a lively and fun atmosphere. These strategies usually contain either the elements of therapeutic or zealous listening. The common aspect of all listening strategies is dealing with, or even playing with, power relations and intimacy as a subordinate listener. In these ways, hostesses create customers' satisfaction and gain their favour and trust, which eventually brings money, networks, protection and temporary power to influence the hierarchy among hostesses. Therefore, hostesses' listening is construed as a streetwise skill: in other words, an interactional weapon of the weak.

One of the successful conversations is described as a *moriagaru* (lively and fun) conversation. Hostesses contribute to this type of conversation as subordinate and proactive listeners, while male customers also often make an effort to create such interactions as speakers. In this way, customers dominate a situation and enhance their sense of maleness or feel recognised. This phenomenon reveals that a *moriagaru* conversation in a hostess club occurs based on the presence of a gendered division of labour in conversation and as a result of both sides' endeavours. This phenomenon also discloses a contradiction with regard to the notion of the ideal communicator: such a communicator is said to be a good listener; however, in hostess-club contexts, male customers tend to idealise a good communicator as a competent speaker and they expect female hostesses to be good listeners.

Hostesses' listening and the ideal listener in self-help guides have a lot of common elements: deploying *aizuchi* and *unazuki*, displaying exaggerated reactions, asking questions strategically, avoiding advising, criticising and arguing, and not holding the floor of a conversation. The authors of self-help guides indirectly teach the importance of controlling self-assertiveness and reading the atmosphere and the hierarchy, which hostesses do as professional listeners. Conversely, aspects which the authors do not mention but which hostesses carry out as listeners are providing a witty *tsukkomi* and *boke*, changing language use and collaborating with the other listeners. These differences show that the authors do not aim or presuppose that a listener contributes to fun or *moriagaru* conversations, but hostesses' listening fulfils this role. Hostesses' examples show that the ideal listener is someone who can deploy both therapeutic and zealous listening, handle power relations, entertain others and make others satisfied.

This analysis of hostesses' listening suggests further enquiries about listening, such as: What would be an ideal listener in an interaction without a financial exchange? How do listeners with altruistic values listen to others? What is successful listening for them? In the next chapter, I will introduce the example of active listening volunteers.

Chapter 4. Volunteers' listening as 'a pure gift'

In this chapter, I analyse active listening (AL) volunteers (*keichō borantia*). Usually, in their 60s and 70s, these people offer listening services often (but not restricted to that age group) to elderly people in different ways; such as visiting individuals' houses, visiting elderly people's nursing homes or running an open-café where everyone can come to talk. They attempt to support elderly people to lead healthy and less lonely lives. They are happy to help people or contribute to the well-being of local communities and do not expect anything in return. Their volunteering does not involve money, unlike hostesses who ultimately are listening to customers for money. However, although their volunteering is altruistic, some clients perceive AL volunteers' listening as 'a gift' that requires reciprocation. This mechanism entails a power relation. How do clients reciprocate? How do AL volunteers manage these power balances? In this chapter, I analyse the way in which volunteers and clients manage reciprocity in interaction, and the ways of negotiation to balance power relations.

4.1 History and outline

4.1.1 History of active listening in Japan

The idea of AL arrived in Japan around the late 1940s and spread in the early 50s to 60s. It originally came from client-centred therapy (also called a person-centred approach) established by Carl Ransom Rogers in the US in 1942.

AL was not the first therapeutic approach used in Japan. Since the Meiji era, around 1903, Japanese scholars started studying Sigmund Fraud's psychoanalysis and Carl Jung's analytical psychology (Nihon shinri gakkai 2005). Morita therapy (a type of psychotherapy) was established in 1919, which is a method of therapy of Japanese origin (Centre for Morita therapy online, accessed September 2019; Lebra 1976:215). Around the 1940s and 50s, while Rogers's idea was being introduced to Japan, a former businessman and Buddhist minister Yoshimoto Ishin developed *naikan* (introspective) therapy in 1954, and in 1956, clinical psychologist Umezu Kōsaku introduced behavioural therapy (Lebra 1976:202; McVeigh 2017:174–176). Why was Roger's idea favourably accepted in Japan even though there were many other approaches in psychology and therapy?

Clinical psychologist Hara Chieko (2009:20) suggests the following reasons. Firstly, it was theoretically easy to understand. Secondly, it denied authoritarian attitudes and respected clients' dignity, which complied with the political trend of democracy in the post-war period. Thirdly, it consisted of the concept of accepting one's original self that was widely used in Morita therapy and Zen. Therefore, although in 1967, Kawai Hayao reintroduced Jung's theory, which is still influential, and since the 80s to 90s, narrative therapy/approach has attracted attention (Nakagawa 2014; Noguchi 2002;), AL was more successful in attracting scholars, therapists and volunteers. Psychologist Nishikawa Yasuo (2008) and Japanologist Brian McVeigh (2016:174–176) point out that, in the post-war period, psychology in Japan was transformed from the so-called German-style traditional psychology to American-style psychology (including Rogers's theory), (although the fact that many German scholars moved to the US should be noted). Not only did Rogers's idea comfortably fit with traditional Japanese therapeutic ideas, but also the political and historical background contributed to the spread of his concept.

In 1948, developmental and educational psychologist Arthur Thomas Jersild visited Japan and lectured on Rogers's theory (McVeigh 2016:174–176). Psychologist Tomoda Fujio translated Rogers's *Counseling and Psychotherapy* into Japanese in 1951. Tomoda and psychologist Itō Hiroshi led the counselling movement in Japan (Sugitani 1989). In the same year, researchers from the University of Minnesota lectured on counselling in Tokyo University, this was followed by establishing a counselling system for students at the university. This movement then rapidly spread to other universities, and other academic institutions related to clinical psychology were also established (Saitō 2003:91–92). Since the 1960s to 70s, Rogers's way of counselling (AL) has been widely accepted by psychologists and researchers.

Since the 1970s, volunteering related to counselling and AL has begun to develop. For example, in 1971, the telephone hotline '*Inochi no denwa*' was established in Tokyo, drawing on the work of the original hotline started in London in 1953 (Federation of *Inochi no denwa* online, accessed June 2018). There are now about 6500 hotline volunteers who use AL skills, spread across 60 cities. This organisation also offers AL training courses both for the hotline volunteers and in-person volunteers and social workers.

From the 1980s, local councils' social welfare departments recruited volunteers in order to start conversation volunteering for elderly people at home. Middle-aged and older housewives

answered the request and started volunteering (Yokoyama 2006). These volunteers perhaps learnt caring ways of having a conversation, but it is arguable whether they learned AL skills or not.

Since the 90s, two groups started their volunteering based on AL. Murata Hisayuki and his colleagues started visiting nursing homes as members of *Nihon keichō juku* to offer AL volunteering in Yamagata prefecture in 1993 (*Nihon keichō juku* online, accessed June 2018). At roughly the same time, a representative of the group called *Nihon keichō borantia kyōkai* (originally called the institution of Whole Family Care), Suzuki Kinue, started both a hotline and in-person conversation volunteering, based on a program called Senior Peer Counselling started in the US in 1978 (Osada 2008:181–185). The media, and people in the fields of nursing, social welfare and philosophy have also started recognising the importance of listening and conversation, and incorporated these into their work (Yokoyama 2006).

A survey on volunteering activities throughout Japan (The Japan National Council of Social Welfare 2009:110) states that in terms of categories of volunteering (such as education, sports, human rights or environmental issues), 44.1 per cent of volunteers (2288 respondents) respond that they are involved in the welfare of elderly people. Moreover, in terms of detailed activities, 39.2 per cent of respondents chose 'conversation and interaction', including being interlocutors, or playing with participants ranging across children, elderly people and foreigners etc (2009:114). Therefore, from this data, it could be seen that many volunteers participate in activities related to some kind of conversational volunteering for elderly people. In addition, the number of training courses indicates an increase in AL volunteers. A lot of local councils' social welfare departments and established non-governmental organisations hold training courses every year and those who participate often establish their own groups. Therefore, it is likely that a large city will have several groups.

The use of AL has expanded to a wide range of areas now (Sano 2015). For example, a volunteering magazine *Network* (Tokyo Volunteering Centre Civil Activity Centre 2010) once featured various projects related to listening, such as AL volunteering, life story listening projects, foreigner support and hotline for children. In response to my email asking why they focused on listening, the magazine's editor responded (2010), 'These days, "listening", including both hearing and asking, has a lot of attention. For example, we receive many enquiries to participate in AL volunteering or counselling related activities. [...] The common understanding of these activities is that "listening" is a necessary attitude/skill to have in order both to respect individuals and to

establish a relationship based on diversity.' This comment indicates the rise of attention given to AL. After 3.11 (the Great East Japan Earthquake) in 2011, '*Yorisoi hotline*' was established. This prioritises, but is not restricted to, people calling from disaster-stricken zones (*Yorisoi hotline* online, accessed September 2019). Furthermore, there are now a large number of paid listening services. I could find at least 25 such websites in 2010, compared to only two in 2008 (Shirota 2011). It was unclear, however, whether they were still actually offering services or not. I received several responses by email from them saying that they no longer provide such services. In contrast, in 2019, one can find numerous websites for paid listening services. AL is in great demand in contemporary Japan.

The spread of AL should be considered a part of psychologism (*shinri shugi*, psychological reductionism)/therapeutic culture (*serapī bunka*) in Japan [xxiii]. These phenomena consist of movements such as self-help literature, self-help seminars, group therapies, counselling and self-analysis, and have been spreading since around the 1970s. Sociologist Mori Shinichi (2000:9, 14) defines psychologism in Japan as a phenomenon that people acquire techniques and knowledge based on psychology and psychiatry and focus on individuals' inner selves rather than society. These phenomena often use the word 'a technique of…' (*…no gijutsu*), empathy, heart and self-fulfilment. As he points out, many current self-help books on listening use the term 'techniques of listening' as their titles (Higashiyama 2000; Higuchi 2008; Hiraki 2013; Ito 2003; Kikumoto 2011; Komiya 2008; Nemoto 2015; Tanimoto 2015; The institution of mental health care 2006) and emphasise 'empathetic' listening in order to fulfil one's own goals. Sociologist Koike Yasushi (2007:1, 8) defines therapeutic culture as the prevalence of knowledge pertaining to psychology and psychiatry in individuals' everyday life, which provides norms of behaviour. As Koike points out, AL skills are now recommended in counselling, the workplace, volunteering and other aspects

[xxiii] The emergence of psychologism and therapeutic culture are caused by individualistic and competitive values in contemporary Japan. Religious scholar Shimazono Susumu (1996 in Koike 2007:6), who used the term therapeutic culture in Japan in his article for the first time, argues that therapeutic culture has emerged from the situation in which conventional communities such as family, school or hospital which used to be in charge of socialisation and caring no longer work as efficiently as before. Similar arguments can be found in others' research (Koike 2007:205; Mori 2000:8, 230; Yamanouchi 2003:216–230). They conclude that psychologism/therapeutic culture is thoroughly immersed in the concept of individualism, the neo conservative/neo-liberal economy and the rationalisation of society, which eventually leads to people focussing on managing one's own emotion and self-fulfilment rather than on community and on becoming useful and efficient in any situation. People deal with these demands with the help of listening. Around the year 2000 when the economic bubble burst and individualistic and competitive values escalated, the psychologism and therapeutic culture helped those under the pressure of self-fulfilment and self-responsibility, therefore self-help books including topics related to listening became popular.

of social life such as among family and friends. These skills that non-academics and non-professionals learn through self-help literature or seminars are called 'pop-psychology' (Satō and Mizoguchi 1997:537–8). AL skills are becoming a part of pop-psychology, and psychologism encourages the rise of the use of AL.

In the US, people operating in therapeutic culture – brought about by the intensification of individualistic and competitive values – use listening skills to cope with everyday matters [xxiv]. For example, Bellah *et al*. (1996:2223–2648) point out that therapeutic culture gradually permeates into workplaces and more general social life, causing people to seek therapeutic sessions to practice their oral expression skills which in turn, through being listened to, double as psychological support. Co-workers start giving therapy to each other to handle their feelings more effectively and to build intimacy as a means of working productively with others. A female county supervisor of a state welfare agency explains that she learns how to listen to herself and others, and how to step into their shoes and sees things from their perspectives, which helps her in focusing and solving problems. Her comment reveals that one of the cores of therapeutic culture is listening. AL in Japan also teaches people the importance of listening both to oneself and others and of understanding the speakers' worlds from the speakers' points of view. Through this type of listening, people in Japan and the US tend to create contractual intimacy and strategic cooperation.

Overall, in the 1950s to 60s, Roger's client-centred approach spread, providing the basis for current AL in Japan. From the 60s to 70s, counselling and AL were extensively accepted by psychologists and researchers. Since the 1970s, AL skills and knowledge permeated into everyday life through the phenomena of psychologism/therapeutic culture. The movement of AL volunteering should be placed in this narrative. (See Chapter 2 about the theory of AL.)

4.1.2 Outline of AL volunteering groups

The AL volunteering groups in which I was allowed both to interview volunteers and to observe their activities are mainly in Tokyo, but also Nagano and Hyōgo. Firstly, I visited a volunteering group named 'Fukurō' in Tokyo, which allowed me to research them for my master's thesis in 2011. Secondly, I searched for websites and found an AL open-cafe held by a group I call 'Trust' in Tokyo. AL groups often post information regarding their activities on websites of local

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[xxiv] Many scholars point out the spread of therapeutic culture in the US and the tendency of self-focus (Bellah *et al*. 1996; Giddens 1992; Lasch 1991; Nolan 1998; Rieff 1961, 1966; Vitz 1994).

councils' social welfare department, but in many cases, it is difficult to find a person in charge or a contact number. In addition, some of them work only once a month or less or sometimes did not fit my fieldwork schedule (I was carrying out fieldwork in the hostess club at the same time). 'Trust' clearly writes where and when they have the next open-cafe, and the timing suited my schedule. Another reason I chose Trust was to observe an open-cafe-style and to compare it to the visiting style of Fukurō. These two were the main groups I observed. I also visited two other groups I call 'Hope' and 'Symphony' in Tokyo through a connection in the city council. Moreover, I joined others through Iwanuma's (a male AL coach) connection; 'Hanamizuki' in Nagano and an individual volunteer in Hyōgo.

Getting permission to observe was one of the main difficulties I encountered. Volunteers should guarantee their clients' confidentiality and must protect their privacy. Therefore, they tend to be reluctant to accept a request to observe from a stranger, while welcoming interviews with volunteers. Therefore, first I made contact with Fukurō where there were people who already knew me. After that, I tried to meet volunteers through connections like city councils and Iwamatsu.

The age and gender ratio of AL volunteers I was involved with largely reflects the result of a survey on volunteering activities throughout Japan (The Japan National Council of Social Welfare 2009:102). The most represented age group was volunteers in their 60s, followed by people in their 70s. This is consistent with the age groups of various volunteers across the country. It was rare to meet AL volunteers who were other ages, especially younger than the 40s. Female volunteers accounted for 70% to 80% of the total, and men accounted for 20% to 30%. The percentages for age and gender of elderly people who visited open cafes was almost the same.

4.2 Subtle power negotiation

AL volunteers utilise listening to reach out to elderly people and make their lives less lonely. One 91-year old male volunteer named Okada told me, 'After my retirement, I wanted to contribute to society. Although I do not feel that I achieve something through volunteering, I am happy when someone says to me, "thank you for listening"'. Like Okada, many volunteers identify their desire to give back to society as one of the main reasons that motivated them to continue volunteering. Other volunteers also mentioned that they felt happy when their clients enjoyed conversing with

them or thanked them[xxv]. Volunteers express the desire to help others and do not expect to be helped in return, as they conceive their help as being altruistic. In this stance, volunteers tend to create opportunities in which clients can speak freely, while the volunteers themselves merely listen intently.

At times, however, the clients attempt to break presupposed conversational styles such as a one-sided conversation or a 'get-to-hear-by-someone' style (*kīte morau*). For example, clients ask volunteers to talk about themselves or to give their opinions on a certain topic, or look to entertain volunteers in different ways. Why and how do these situations come about?

AL as a mode of interaction produces situations of 'disproportionate listening', in which those who predominantly talk are separated from those who mainly listen. I suggest that both volunteers and clients perceive attentive listening as 'a gift'. While volunteers consider their work as a 'pure gift', thinking 'I only listen to you' or 'I am devoting myself to you', the situation covertly instils a feeling of obligation in the receiver/client and the need to offer something in return. Sociologist Marcel Mauss (2002) has famously argued that gift-giving is a process entailing three distinct components: the act of giving a gift, the reception of it, and the receiver's reciprocation. The refusal of a gift often connotes an attitude of hostility toward or disrespect for the giver. By failing to give something in return, the receiver is placed in an inferior position, which elevates the position of the giver. If all three steps of a gift-giving situation are fulfilled, however, an alliance can be formed between individuals, and conflicts can be resolved. Thus, reciprocity can be viewed as the fundamental principle at the heart of gift-giving, with gifts acting to bond individuals together, producing situations of social obligation, and imposing a value-laden power dynamic situation on individuals.

Even in situations in which a gift is given as a form of charity, scholars argue that the gifted item sets into motion and embodies notions of reciprocity (Befu 1968; Blau 1964; Gregory *et al.* 1975; Heath 1976:60; Mauss 2002; Slater 2015). Criticising Malinowski's idea of a 'pure gift', Mauss (2002;93–94) considers that 'gifts are not freely given' but are counter-services, which enable individuals to forge and maintain beneficial alliances. For example, the gift given by a

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[xxv] A survey on volunteering activities (not only AL) throughout Japan (The Japan National Council of Social Welfare 2009:107–108) reveals that about forty per cent of respondents chose 'want to return the favour to society' and 'want to contribute to improving a local community' as their motivations to volunteer (2288 respondents, multiple answers allowed), which was one of the highest categories. The same tendency was shown in the previous survey in 2002.

husband on Trobriand Island to his wife is a kind of reward for sexual services, with the presents given to chiefs functioning as tributes. In this way, a gift-giving mechanism inevitably contains an intrinsic disposition of reciprocity; there can never be such a thing as a 'free gift'. Anthropologist Befu Harumi (1968) also doubts the existence of altruistic gifts in the case of Japan. For instance, the donations that are made to community halls or recreation facilities for children appear on the surface to be selfless gifts; however, Befu reveals that these donations are a vehicle for individuals to fulfil their social obligation and gain positive psychological rewards and validation in the process. He argues that altruistic donations could never function well in Japanese cultural contexts, in which people often strive to cultivate meaningful social lives in interdependent relationships. Anthropologist Yamaguchi Mutsumi (2012) also reveals reciprocal exchanges carried out among households and individuals from 1813 to 2005. One of her methods is analysing detailed records of exchanges of gifts and services, such as diaries, *kōden-chō* (a condolence-gifts record) or *shūgi-chō* (a celebration-gifts record), and she points out that the habit of recording social exchanges functioned as a cultural system which was built on reciprocity (Yamaguchi 2012:77). Anthropologist Colleen Johnson's (1974) research on the Japanese Americans in Honolulu and folklorist Itō Mikiharu's (2011:131) literature review on gift-giving culture also state the importance of the symmetric or balanced reciprocity in Japanese society. These examples indicate the need of reciprocity in gift-giving, rather than 'a pure gift' in the Japanese cultural contexts.

The nature of reciprocity often produces power negotiations between a giver and a receiver. Sociological theorist Richard Marc Emerson (1972; 1962) argues that power is 'a structurally induced phenomenon' and 'resides implicitly in the other's dependency'. This argument sheds further light on the mechanism of gift-giving in greater detail. Therefore, for example, Mauss (2002:76) illustrates in his research how the Brahmin of ancient India were wary to accept their king's gifts, conceiving these gifts in the popular idiom as a poison that would render them reliant on the king. These Brahmins expressed the notion that a gift is 'at first honey, [and], in the end, poison'.

Gifts in this sense impose power dynamics, as is also revealed in my research on AL volunteering. When perceived by clients as an altruistic gift, AL volunteering carries the potential psychologically and socially to compel clients to embody helpee (subordinate) positions and remain dependent on volunteers. Akiyama, a female volunteer in her 70s, acknowledges in her testimony the authoritative power of AL, reporting that 'For some clients, volunteers' listening or

visits would be a kind of burden, so I tried to interact casually'. Akiyama's testimony reveals her ignorance concerning the norm of reciprocity that governs gift-giving but seems to be conscious of the power which volunteers impose on the clients. Of gaining power in a gift-giving process, sociological theorist Peter Michael Blau (1964:126) argues that many aspects of social life reflect an interest in profiting from social interactions, therefore people tend to give generously – and at times to excess – to provide incentives for the other party to boost his/her supply. Blau therefore denies the existence of altruistic motives in social life, and insists on social exchange as an exercise of power over others (Rijit and Macy 2006). Anthropologist Inge Daniels (2009) also reports that in Japan, those who are in higher positions, such as teachers, doctors or company presidents, tend to receive large amount of gifts as repayments for services or guidance, while subordinates, especially young people at the start of their career, are placed under financial and social pressure of returning favours, which reinforces a hierarchical structure. Therefore, receiving gifts including services or guidance oblige not only to simply return interactions but also to accept power negotiations.

Clients intentionally or unintentionally reciprocate volunteers' dedicated listening and eventually manage a balanced power relationship in subtle ways. One day in March, I joined Akiyama (70s) and Nakajima (40s), two female members of Hanamizuki in Nagano, to visit their male client Morinaga-san (80s)[xxvi]. Akiyama is a leader of Hanamizuki. She was born in Tokyo but moved to her husband's hometown in Nagano. She used to work as a *minsei-iin* (a local welfare commissioner) in the local area in Nagano, which led her to becoming an AL volunteer. Nakajima is an office worker now working in Tokyo but she used to live in Nagano for three years due to her husband's work; at that time she joined Hanamizuki.

Morinaga-san is a male farmer in his 80s living with his eldest son, who works at a local supermarket. Morinaga-san has been coping with a speech impediment for the last five years due to suffering a cerebral haemorrhage. For this reason, his care manager asked Hanamizuki to send volunteers to visit him. Akiyama had been visiting Morinaga-san for 5 years, with Nakajima often joining her during the period in which she was residing in Nagano.

Akiyama drove us from the small train station to Morinaga-san's house in the countryside, with the trip lasting a total of 20 minutes. It would be impossible to work as a volunteer without a

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[xxvi] In order to avoid confusion regarding who volunteers and clients are, I will refer to volunteers without their honorific titles and clients with honorific titles such as ...-*san*.

car in this area, as individuals' houses and nursing homes are often at a considerable geographical remove from one another.

Morinaga-san's house is a large, traditional, wooden Japanese house with a parking space out front, a small shed and a small garden, surrounded by large fields to grow flowers and vegetables. There are only a few houses in the vicinity. The weather was temperate but still cold, with some snow remaining on the street. When we arrived, Morinaga-san was sitting on a chair inside the *engawa* (veranda) enclosed by the sliding glass doors. He spotted us, smiled and pointed to the entrance as if to say, 'Please enter!'

Entering Morinaga-san's living room, Nakajima politely said, 'Long time no see!' to which Morinaga-san casually answered 'Long time no see', and smiled. Akiyama greeted Morinaga-san and spoke about the weather, at which point Morinaga-san motioned for us all to sit around the *kotatsu* (a table with a built-in heater and a blanket that covers all four sides of the table, in order to trap the heat underneath) in the middle of the *tatami* (Japanese straw floor coverings) in the living room. The room contained a gas stove, another low table beside the *kotatsu*, and small shelves cluttered with small objects and papers.

Akiyama introduced me to Morinaga-san as a student who wanted to study listening volunteering. Morinaga-san smiled and said, 'Yes, yes' (*hai hai*), showing he undoubtedly understood the concept of listening volunteering. Morinaga-san said to Nakajima, 'There are many things to show you today!' placing a pile of paper and an envelope on the table. Morinaga-san picked up one of the scattered envelopes and explained that the pictures were taken at the betrothal ceremony for his younger son at the local shrine. Akiyama, Nakajima and I looked at these and made comments such as 'You look good in this picture' and 'This woman is beautiful!'. Morinaga-san went on to explain the *Onbashira* festival (a famous local festival in this region), where trees for the festival are stored and how dangerous this festival is, mainly for my own benefit, as I seemed to be a complete outsider to the region, with Akiyama adducing additional information. Akiyama spoke with a local accent to Morinaga-san, although she used standard Japanese with Nakajima and me.

Morinaga-san showed us more of his prepared sheets of paper. One was an advertisement for a local supermarket, featuring his elder son's picture and his comments as a store manager. Three other papers were drawings of a new house for Morinaga-san's younger son and his wife. We looked at these and commented with phrases like, 'Oh, there are two children's rooms!' and 'Yeah,

it is important to have a windbreak space, isn't it?' Morinaga-san said, 'It is like a rabbit hutch! It is weird to have a shed roof (sloping one way only).' He seemed to be very happy to share his current life with the volunteers, and the conversation proceeded to incorporate a discussion concerning the soon-to-be-built factory in the neighbourhood.

Akiyama introduced me to Morinaga-san in greater detail. He asked me whereabouts I am studying in the UK, to which I responded that I was studying at Cambridge. Morinaga-san was so surprised that he made a very funny face which made us laugh a lot. Nakajima said, 'I have never seen you pull such a face!?' He seemed to be very happy to make us all laugh and went on to ask me several questions and finally said, 'Please visit me again when you come back to Japan.' with a broad smile. I told Morinaga-san that my grandparents' house was in Nagano and that I was feeling nostalgic hearing the use of dialect words such as '*sōzura*' or '*sōra*' (meaning yes). Morinaga-san and Akiyama talked more about dialects, and Akiyama went on to tell me that Morinaga-san had won many competitions related to farming. Morinaga-san then quietly opened the *shoji* (sliding screen) behind him a fraction to show a lot of trophies. He did not say much then but was grinning.

Due to a cerebral haemorrhage, Morinaga-san has a problem not only with his speech but also with the right side of his body, and cannot move easily. He showed us the toes of his right foot and tried to move these but they did not move smoothly. Then, Nakajima also tried to move her toes but was not able to move hers either, saying, '[Although] I did not have a cerebral haemorrhage, [I also] can't move my toes!', which made Morinaga-san laugh. He replied to her, 'Are you ok?!' (*omae daijōbu ka*), at which Nakajima laughed a lot. She does not always put a smile on her face but has a very playful laugh. Akiyama once described her laughing as being '*keta keta*' (an onomatopoeic word for cheerful laughing). Nakajima often replied with humorous comments and spoke fast. AL theory argues that AL listeners should adjust their conversational speed to speakers. However, Nakajima's fast speech patterns did not seem to bother Morinaga-san. She frequently and naturally used an echoing technique, which, at one point, I used to consider an unnatural and undesirable tactic for AL volunteers to adopt. However, Nakajima's fast semantically reflecting technique came across as effective and natural in this AL interaction, and she was mostly consistent in her use of honorific language.

After about an hour and a half, it was time for us to take our leave. Morinaga-san and Nakajima said, 'It was a pleasure to see you again!' to each other. I thanked Morinaga-san, and we

went outside. He opened the windows of the veranda to see us off from inside, and we all started talking again about swallows, tomatoes and other vegetables. After talking with Morinaga-san for a bit longer, the three of us finally got in our car and left.

Nakajima and Akiyama's dedicated listening was a gift for Morinaga-san, comprising their donated time and skilled emotional labour. They used both therapeutic and zealous listening, giving Morinaga-san their undivided attention, putting him in the centre of the conversation, offering empathetic understanding, sometimes making short comments and asking questions enthusiastically. Morinaga-san, on the other hand, also strove to reciprocate in the course of their conversation. He prepared papers to talk about, upheld the conversation as a speaker and made the volunteers enjoy their time and laugh a lot. His efforts contributed to the creation of a mutually enjoyable AL interaction, and can be conceived of as a kind of return gift for the volunteers. The reciprocity in this AL interaction reveals that even when a gift-giving interaction is coated by a veneer of altruism, volunteers' listening behaviour often brings into motion a power dynamic obliging clients to reciprocate in some form.

Similarly, we have seen how, in other situations, such as that of a disaster-stricken zone, the help that is offered by volunteers is seen as a gift requiring something to be given in return. Anthropologist David Slater (2015:267–291) describes how tsunami survivors in the Tōhoku area of Japan dealt with the help given by volunteers. Slater himself recounts his experience as a muddy relief volunteer in Ishinomaki, Miyagi prefecture, in which he and several colleagues cleaned a part of a garden belonging to a man who had lost his wife and workplace in the tsunami. Although the man (who Slater called Chiba-san) was unfriendly and did not communicate with the volunteers at all, in the end, he gave the volunteers a selection of hastily wiped muddy cups and shot glasses, which was probably the best he could do as his house did not even have running water at this point. Slater argues that Chiba-san was neither too proud, nor was he avoiding owing something but tried to meet his social obligations towards people he probably would not meet again in order to preserve his self-esteem. Much like Chiba-san, other tsunami survivors treated the goods, services and support provided by volunteers as gifts requiring reciprocation. This notion of obligatory reciprocity made it difficult for some tsunami survivors to accept such gifts, and one elderly woman whom Slater met in the region in particular completely refused help from volunteers. In other cases, survivors re-framed the aid they received as being an entitlement or right when one is a person in a disaster zone, rather than a gift.

Chiba-san and Morinaga-san's attitudes resemble one another. They both considered the assistance offered by volunteers to be gifts and were motivated to return something in order both to fulfil their social, moral obligations and to maintain their self-respect. Sociologist Alvin W. Gouldner (1960) discusses how the norm of reciprocity may bring an inclination for people to exchange 'only or primarily with those who can reciprocate'; thus, individuals tend to neglect those who seem to be unable to reciprocate, such as children, old people or those who are mentally or physically challenged. However, volunteers in these two cases offered gifts to those who were possibly unable to reciprocate, and both Chiba-san and Morinaga-san attempted to reciprocate the gifts they received, even in spite of their vulnerable situations. Neither received 'free gifts'.

However, we can go further with this analysis of gift-giving by asking whether there is a distinction between reciprocity and balance in the power dynamic between volunteers and their clients? When it comes to economic value, the value of time spent, skilled listening, the emotional labour, and volunteers' long-time physical labour in a disaster zone, none of these gifts seem to be adequately balanced by what the receivers gave in return such as an entertainment of volunteers or, in Chiba-san's case, the offering of hastily wiped cups and glasses.

These seemingly imbalanced relationships occuur for two reasons. First, the volunteers are more likely to possess social resources, which outweigh those of AL clients or tsunami survivors. In terms of social resources, business researcher Anil Mathur (1996) discusses that seniors retain sources of social power, such as money, discretionary time and skills, which together determine the quality of their social interaction, level of self-respect and psychological well-being. AL volunteers, who are usually in their 60s or 70s, are the people who take full advantage of these resources. These resources themselves do not have any manifest functionality as empowering tools but, as Emerson (1972; 1962) argues, when they are used in interactions, they take on power, and can be used to extract another individual's dependence. Thus, by providing a service of listening for free, AL volunteers affirm they are not relying on someone.

The second reason for these imbalanced relationships is 'giving first voluntarily'. The person who takes the initiative to provide a charitable gift for free gains power because a return gift by its very nature means that an obligation is returned, and the gift does not have the same voluntary value. For example, Ogasawara (1998:146, see more details in Chapter 2.3) mobilises this rationale in her explanation for why OL's Valentine's day chocolate-giving brings temporary disproportionate power to women, despite male employees eventually returning the presents they

receive one month later on White Day. Ogasawara argues that White-day return gifts from men primarily constitute a gesture of reciprocal politeness which will never be sufficient in discharging men from the debts of returning a charitable value. In this sense, AL volunteers' gifted listening may also never be fully reciprocated by their clients.

However, several researchers suggest that unbalanced relations will always be re-balanced in several ways (Blau 1964; Emerson 1962, 1964; Homans 1961:64). Emerson (1964) suggests that 'status giving'. For instance, a lower-power employee displays high deference to a powerful boss and the boss subsequently depends on the employee to secure his self-esteem. Clients in AL volunteering allow volunteers to perform as volunteers, so they bestow the volunteers' status. The volunteers might also subconsciously maintain their self-respect by performing as volunteers. Moreover, volunteers often mention that they found motivation and satisfaction through not only helping their clients but also interacting with other volunteers. Without their position as volunteers, they are not be able to gain this emotional satisfaction. In this sense the volunteers also rely on clients for their sense of self-esteem and psychological well-being. Blau (1964:148) similarly proposes that if Party A cannot sufficiently reciprocate to Party B, A can always compensate for this imbalance by acknowledging B's power over A. In AL volunteering, clients who accept their role as helpees tend to appreciate volunteers repeatedly and tend to have smooth interactions. The clients probably successfully compensate for the gap in reciprocity by admitting volunteers' power. Through helping to secure volunteers' self-esteem or acknowledging their power, balanced relations seem to be a feasible possibility.

Another balancing operation is 'gaining respect', which is found in sociologist James J. Dowd's research (1975). He analyses the danger of exchange for powerless parties, such as aged people. Such people usually possess four types of power for exchanges (e.g. money, approval, respect and compliance). One of them is utilising respect to retain their power. For example, in a factory, an older employee attempts to get respected for their knowledge and experiences by younger employees in order to be given a lighter workload. In AL volunteering, clients could use respect as a social currency because several AL volunteers explain that they enjoy learning from seniors by listening to something they do not know or have not experienced. The clients can become givers in this sense if the volunteers respect them.

Returning to the example of Morinaga-san: how was the power dynamic between the elderly client and his AL volunteers balanced? Morinaga-san received a gift of conversation time, skilled

listening and emotional labour that the volunteers devoted. On the other hand, he was careful to keep up his side of the conversation, through entertaining the volunteers, giving information about the local festival, the local accent and the neighbourhood development plan, and making the volunteers laugh, as if trying to compensate them for their effort. Morinaga-san certainly attempted to dominate the conversation and to show off his senior position which includes long-term knowledge and experiences, which induced respect in the volunteers; and these efforts in turn allowed him to gloss over the helper-helpee relationship, to some extent. He also gave the volunteers an opportunity to perform as volunteers.

While volunteers gave Morinaga-san the charitable gift of listening, they were entertained and taught by Morinaga-san, and received opportunities to perform as volunteers and to help him or to be appreciated by him. Moreover, Akiyama's motivation in joining the volunteering was to use listening to help someone and, generally, was interested in interacting with people. More specifically, she enjoys learning something new in conversations and feels happy when she can find topics that her clients enjoy talking about. Therefore, through her involvement in AL volunteering, she seemed to be receiving the benefits she sought, such as contributing as a volunteer and enjoying the interactions with both her clients and other volunteers. Nakajima did not mention helping others as her motivation but was interested in communication skills. She once said that whenever she does AL she feels like she is carrying out interactional experiments, thus she probably used AL volunteering as a communication training opportunity. Therefore, in terms of reciprocity, it would be possible to say that Morinaga-san and the volunteers found a balanced and reciprocal relationship.

There were further subtle elements that influenced their power negotiation. In the case of Akiyama, three factors – being of a similar age to Morinaga-san, having visited him already for five years and being able and willing to use the local accent – helped her in establishing a close and hierarchically balanced relationship with him. She used honorific language with a local accent, allowing for a respectful junior-senior relationship, along with a friendly local neighbourly relationship. Akiyama conveyed to me that she would intentionally use the local accent to allow for closeness between herself and her clients, while employing polite and formal language to maintain an appropriate psychological distance between them. Her skilful language use and friendly attitude enabled her to use listening as 'a mask of silent authority' (See more details about this concept in Chapter 2.3).

Nakajima used both therapeutic and zealous listening but tended to use zealous listening as she asked many questions and played dumb at times as a response to Morinaga-san, which allowed her to stay in a slightly subordinate position. Her behaviour might have resulted from the age gap, which brought about a junior-senior relationship. This relationship was also revealed in the way in which Morinaga-san called Nakajima '*omae*' – a casual form of 'you' connoting an inferior status – while Akiyama was referred to merely as 'Akiyama-san'. Nakajima availed herself of a mixture of honorific and casual language, which allowed for the emergence of a friendly junior-senior relationship. As a result, Akiyama and Nakajima's behaviour as listeners enabled them to disguise their role as helpers.

My own presence as a student/learner probably intensified Morinaga-san's subjective sense of power in the relationship, causing him to exaggerate his role as teacher or senior. The presence of both Nakajima and myself as younger female figures might also have contributed to Morinaga-san's dominant position as a mentor or teacher, in keeping with the patriarchal quality of gender and age relations in Japanese society.

Therefore, in Morinaga-san's case, the volunteers' devoted listening became a voluntary gift while Morinaga-san also reciprocated in various ways. As a result, the volunteers also received benefits such as having an enjoyable experience and the satisfaction of becoming volunteers. In addition to volunteers' subtle listening strategies to conceal their helper positions, three of them collaborated to create balanced and multi-layered relationships, including helper-helpee, listener-speaker, junior-senior, entertainee-entertainer and learner-teacher discourses.

As indicated by this example, gender affects AL conversations. However, it is difficult to single out gender elements in the analysis of power relations. Other elements – such as age differences, identities as a helper or helpee, previous occupations, social statuses, clients' level of dementia, volunteers' motivations, clients' purposes of seeing volunteers and physical environments – more clearly affected power balance than gender aspects. For example, Hasegawa-san, a man in his 90s, and Yukawa, a male volunteer in his 70s, had to manage their subtle power dynamic until the end of the conversation, while Komine-san, a man in his 90s, and Okada, a male volunteer also in his 90s, smoothly found their own forms of relationship, which concealed their management of power dynamic (see more details in Chapter 4.3). Although their combinations were both male-client and male-volunteer, the power dynamics were different due to the other elements. Kaneko-san, a woman in her 90s, and Kondō, a female volunteer in her late 60s, needed

a power negotiation at the beginning (see more details in Chapter 5.2.2) while Kondō and Miyazaki-san, a woman in her 90s in a care home, or Uchida, a female volunteer in her 70s, and Izumi-san, a woman in her 90s in a day-care centre, seemed from the beginning to find their ways of interactions and relationships more smoothly compared to the former case. These three cases were female-client and female-volunteer, but they exhibited different processes in finding their relationships. Like Morinaga-san's case, mixed-gender AL interaction might have been more likely to have subtly different power negotiations. However, I do not have enough observations and interview data in both one-to-one conversation and group AL (see a list of my research cases with the basic information (age and gender) in Appendix 2) to identify clear patterns.

However, recognising the importance of gender perspectives gives rise to questions in need of further research on communication. For example, if male volunteers visited Morinaga-san, did he use the same strategies to manage power balances? If Akiyama visited a female client, did she change her behaviour as a listener? In other cases, in Trust's open café, I observed that a male volunteer, a man in his late 60s, interfered with a group conversation when one of the visitors, a woman in her early 80s, was proudly talking about her high social status and her successful children and grandchildren. The volunteer cut into the conversation to distribute rights to the other visitors to talk, saying, 'So, Kawashima-san (another person in the group), you also have grandchildren, don't you?' I am wondering whether the volunteer would have interrupted the visitor in the same way if she were a man. In other settings, men's conversational interruption towards women is often reported by scholars (Ehara *et al*. 1984; Fishman 1977; Itakura 2004, 2001; West 1998; Zimmerman and West 1975). As this example indicates, the issue of gender-specific interruption might be found in AL conversations too, even when the visitors are attending a meeting to talk and the volunteer is supposed to listen. In another case, a male volunteer in Fukurō said, 'Even if the client cries, it leaves me cold. But female volunteers seem to be engaging in speakers' stories deeply' (*aite ga naite ite mo dokoka sameta jibun ga imasu…*). A male volunteer in Trust, Yokoyama, also told me that he got tired when listening to the same story again and again (see more details in Chapter 5.1). I have not heard these types of distancing comments from female volunteers. However, this is only anecdotal evidence and cannot be generalised. Yokoyama also said, 'I was so touched by his story that I cried' and another male volunteer in Trust told me that he always tries to immerse himself in his client's world. Due to a lack of interview data to answer this issue, further investigation would be required.

The other gender-related characteristic is that AL volunteers exclude romantic or quasi-romantic relationships with their clients, and I have not heard any sexual banter in both individual or group conversations[xxvii]. By contrast, hostesses sometimes include romantic, quasi-romantic, idol-fan or daughter-father (or sugar-daddy) relationships, which make rules of reciprocity more complicated. AL volunteers probably tend to assume that their clients are not only weak and need help but also have no-gender and are asexual, or they might choose to ignore their clients' gender and sexualities. The ungendered and asexual image is a stereotype of elders. Gerontologist Erdman Palmore (1990:20) suggests both positive and negative stereotypes towards elders as the various outcomes of ageism, and one of the common, negative images is impotency. Similarly, Western elderly who are over sixty-five tend to be perceived as being simply an aged person. Their gender, race, belongings and other characteristics are ignored (Spector-Mersel 2006:75), or 'men and women are seen as "old" before they are characterized in any other way' (Wilson 1995:99). Therefore, for example, elderly people's masculinity is under-researched (Nakahara 2014). AL theory and workshops do not talk about elderly clients' gender aspects or sexuality. Yukawa, a male leader of Fukurō, also mentioned that AL volunteering is 'human to human' (*hito to hito*), so he has not thought about gender or sexuality aspects between volunteers and clients or for clients. Therefore, although both hostess-customer and volunteer-client nurture intimacy through interactions and social exchanges, the former sometimes plays with gender differences or indulges romantic or quasi-romantic relationships, while the latter either simply ignores or intentionally precludes this type of relationship.

The exchanges between Morinaga-san and the volunteers revealed that an appropriate power balance in AL volunteering does not necessarily entail symmetric roles of communication or equal amounts or qualities of exchange in their interaction, but rather consists of attempts made by both parties at preserving reciprocity in their interaction and flexible compensation in their power relations. Hamaguchi (1996:123–6) also argues that ritualistic reciprocity is more important than an equivalent amount/quality of exchange in Japan, criticising anthropologist Ruth Benedict's (1946) opinion that the concept of '*giri*' (an obligation to return something as a result of receiving

[xxvii] Only one case, in an individual conversation with a volunteer, Miyata-san, a female bedridden client in her 70s in a care home (See Appendix 2), complained about things that made her disgusted. She said that one of the male members of staff taking care of her persistently asked her about a male medical doctor visiting her, in order for him to flirt with her doctor, and a resident in another care home once touched her shoulder when he was visiting her care home during the event. She also talked about rumours about who (residents, their relatives and members of staff) slept with whom. Except for these complaints, I have not heard any other sexual jokes or conversational themes.

'*on*' (mercy, kindness or favour)) requires a receiver to carry out an equivalent exchange/return in Japan. Hamaguchi introduces a custom called '*o-utsuri*' as an example that allows a receiver to return an unequal amount/quality of gift or money wrapped in a congratulatory paper. As Lebra (1972) states, it is difficult to calculate reciprocity and its debts and credits in social exchange neatly, especially when it includes not only economic value but also social or emotional value. Exchanges in AL volunteering consist of economic, social and emotional elements. So, volunteers and clients' attempts at managing mutually beneficial interactions can be multifarious and complex; they are however possible.

In this section, I have discussed the attentive listening offered by AL volunteers as a gift and a means to negotiate power relationships. Although their dedicated listening is meant as an altruistic gift for clients, some clients come to perceive this gift as a burden or overshadowed by issues of reciprocity and power balance. This explains the attempts of these parties to reciprocate in order to fulfil moral obligations and to maintain their self-respect. In AL conversations, attempting reciprocity and receiving return gifts are key to interacting comfortably, and the negotiation of a fine balance between client and volunteer was the second key to creating a satisfying relationship. Listening attitudes, language use, age gaps and an issue of respect also influence the power balance. As a result, although listener-speaker and volunteer-client relationships remain to some degree, they manage appropriate power balances. An appropriate power balance does not necessarily mean strictly having equivalent economic benefits as one another, but represents a reciprocal interaction that is flexibly compensated.

Furthermore, in this section, I have discussed several roles of listening regarding gift-giving interactions. When it was received, AL volunteers' dedicated listening became a charitable gift, which entailed a social obligation in reciprocating. When it was used by AL volunteers and skilfully covered by courteous or friendly language use and respectful attitude, their delicate listening, especially therapeutic listening, functioned as a mask of silent authority. When AL volunteers were ready to receive something from, or exchange something with, their clients, their listening became a tool for receiving, either by being entertained by or learning from their clients.

However, sometimes AL volunteers do not accept reciprocal approaches from their clients. Why might this be the case? To answer this I will focus next on the dilemma that can arise between volunteers' benevolence and clients' dignity.

4.3 Discard the mission and enjoy reciprocity

In this section, I compare two examples of AL volunteering in order to show the importance of not clinging too closely to the aim of volunteering missions – helping others by AL – even though these missions are motivated by altruism. Because of this issue, the first case fell short in reciprocal interaction, so generated a slightly uncomfortable relationship, while the second example gave rise to a collaborative interaction and allowed for a balanced relationship.

One day in March, I followed Yukawa, a male leader in his 70s in Fukurō, on a visit to his client Hasegawa-san, a man in his 90s. Yukawa used to work as a civil servant in Inagi city in Tokyo and after retiring, he started being involved in several volunteering groups. Because his work had involved dealing with citizen enquiries and negotiations with many institutions, he wanted to make use of his experience and communication skills and contribute to community life. Hasegawa-san used to work as a medical radiological technician in a hospital in Tokyo. He does not have any memory-related impairment but needs to bring a portable medical kit with tubes connected to his nose and body. Hasegawa-san frequents many local cultural clubs, for example, drawing and writing *haiku* and he looks forward to meeting volunteers from Fukurō. When we arrived at Hasegawa-san's flat where he lives alone, he was informally-dressed in pyjamas with *chanchanko* (padded sleeveless kimono jacket). His apartment had one living room with an open kitchen and a separate bedroom. We were invited to sit at the table in the living room where there were a lot of family pictures, especially pictures of his wife who had passed away.

We talked about several topics: the magnolia tree he had planted for his wife at their 25th wedding anniversary, the TV show called '*Nandemo kantei dan*' (a Japanese TV program which features antique appraisals), the atmosphere of the city in the 'old days', Japanese security police, the UK, his travel experiences in south Asian countries and the memories of his father. Hasegawa-san and Yukawa exchanged information about events happening in the city. Hasegawa-san several times articulated, 'I want to have friends' (*boku wa tomodachi ga hoshiin dayo*). Yukawa simply smiled.

Indeed Yukawa smiled and laughed many times while he was listening to Hasegawa-san. Yukawa sat back in his chair, then leaned forward to show an interest in Hasegawa-san's stories through this movement of his body, displaying a humble attitude. Hasegawa-san spoke with a clear voice and at the beginning did not smile often.

In one instance when our conversation lapsed into a moment of silence, Hasegawa-san suddenly said, 'I do not have any purpose in this life anymore.' (After leaving his house, Yukawa told me that he was worrying about Hasegawa-san's comment). Then, Hasegawa-san asked me to write my name on the back of someone's old business card. He asked everyone who visited him to do so and collected them, as if he was trying to memorise his social life. After that he toyed with his pen, and asked Yukawa and me to copy him. Yukawa failed in the task, and Hasegawa-san commented, 'You are much younger than me! You should be able to do this!', which made Yukawa laugh.

During one of their conversations, Hasegawa-san sometimes said 'Please you say something. I am always the one speaking.' However, Yukawa replied, 'I came here to listen to you' and smiled again. Hasegawa-san clearly understood what kind of volunteer Yukawa was, but, still desired Yukawa to speak up. Hasegawa-san frequently asked questions to Yukawa and myself. He tried to sustain a conversation as Yukawa did.

When Yukawa informed Hasegawa-san concerning the cancellation of the next visit, Hasegawa-san said, 'Eh! No! Why! I am always so looking forward to seeing you guys!' Although he expressed his disappointment for the cancellation, he smiled towards the end of their interaction more than at its outset. After one hour Yukawa said, 'It is time for us to go home'. Hasegawa-san disappointedly replied, 'Eh? Is it already time? You always leave when I start feeling we are getting closer!' We thanked him and left.

Overall, their relationship featured the listener-speaker and helper-helpee frames, although Hasegawa-san tried to change the relationship. They constantly negotiated their roles in communication and power balance. Why did this situation occur? One reason is that their aims of interaction had a clear gap; Hasegawa-san sought reciprocal friendship while Yukawa wanted to help Hasegawa-san by AL.

Hasegawa-san clearly stated that he wanted to have friends. He wanted to hold a mutual and normal conversation as if amongst friends. So he expressed his feelings of discomfort concerning the 'one-man talking' style of their conversation and encouraged Yukawa to speak more. He frequently asked Yukawa questions while maintaining his part of the conversation, as friends do with one other. He clearly attempted to perform as a reciprocal communicator, not as someone in need of help. In terms of content, he enjoyed exchanging information and discussing experiences with his interlocutor, rather than dwelling on his current personal life and challenges. As he said,

'I do not have any purpose in this life anymore', he might well have been feeling lonely or empty, which could be a signal of seeking help. However, probably he first needed to establish a friendship to speak up on this matter. His desire to have friends and a purpose in life might have been indicating his wishes to give someone something in order to feel alive in society, rather than simply being helped. So he attempted to adjust the relationship to friendship, not a listener-speaker or helper-helpee relationship.

Yukawa was mindful of AL rules, therefore maintained his therapeutic listening attitude until the end. His humble attitude and polite language helped him to mitigate the potentially authoritarian helper atmosphere. Thus, his therapeutic listening approach functioned well to mask and maintain his silent authority. However, Yukawa stayed in a helper position and restricted himself from talking too much, saying, 'I came here to listen to you'. He declined Hasegawa-san's attempt to balance the relationship and conduct a normal and friendly conversation. As we have seen, if volunteers do not accept clients' efforts or are not ready to receive something from clients, it prevents clients from fulfilling their social obligations, putting them in inferior positions and denying their self-esteem. Hasegawa-san probably found himself in this type of untenable position.

Yukawa's therapeutic listening and helping attitude, however, cannot be easily evaluated as a failure or a success for several reasons. First, AL volunteering aims neither to cater directly to clients' wishes, nor to provide a context for them to cultivate friendships. Especially, Yukawa's AL group aims 'to have enjoyable conversations and especially to listen to clients wholeheartedly' (*kokoro o komete kiku*). Second, volunteers can protect themselves from being drawn into their clients' emotions by preserving a therapeutic listening attitude. This is why volunteers learn the principles and techniques of AL before joining conversational volunteering. Third, theoretically, it is assumed that speakers can find solutions for their own issues by themselves if they are properly heard by someone who offers therapeutic listening and attitude. Therefore, insisting on therapeutic listening and refusing to tell clients about volunteers' lives can be the right choice. Yukawa sensed Hasegawa-san's issue of not finding a purpose for living, so understood the necessity of using therapeutic listening. Finally, although Hasegawa-san and Yukawa constantly adjusted their relationship and they did not seem to become friends, Hasegawa-san was looking forward to seeing Yukawa, which indicates Hasegawa-san's satisfaction with Yukawa's visit to some extent. On the other hand, Yukawa was able to perform as a volunteer and to contribute to a local community because of Hasegawa-san, which was the initial motive for Yukawa to join the volunteering.

Therefore, although their interaction had uneasy elements and their ways of reciprocity did not function in the way Hasegawa-san hoped for, they still exchanged social and emotional values, which enabled them to continue their relationship.

Hasegawa-san passed away in February 2019 and when I talked to Yukawa in early 2020 by e-mail, although I did not ask any specific questions in relation to their relationship/friendship, he related his dilemma regarding the relationship with Hasegawa-san, recounting a specific episode: One-day Hasegawa-san openly asked Yukawa to become a friend. Yukawa replied, 'That's fine' (*ii desu yo*), but inside he felt emotionally ambiguous (*kokoro no hairanai aimai na kimochi*). Yukawa continued by describing the other episode when Hasegawa-san visited Yukawa's chorus group's recital, which was the only time they met outside the AL volunteering context. Yukawa wrote, 'That (the relationship with Hasegawa-san) has stuck in my mind ever since' (*imada ni kokoro ni hikkakatte imasu*). His words indicated a kind of regret and dilemma that he had; that was whether it was correct or not to interact with Hasegawa-san purely as a volunteer, or if he should have become a friend. This was evidenced by the fact Yukawa did not simply say to Hasegawa-san, 'I came here to listen to you', but was trying to balance their relationship while having a dilemma.

Why does a dilemma like this happen? Why are volunteers unable simply to become friends with their clients? Why are clients unable just to accept volunteers' one-sided listening support? It is important to understand both sides' motivations and perceptions of their relationships. Many volunteers start AL volunteering out of kindness and compassion. All AL volunteers complete training courses and gain experience in real-life situations, so they come to see themselves as trained listeners. A few of them even become proud of their listening skills, and their volunteer work becomes a central source of identity. Moreover, throughout AL activities, most volunteers face one or more of several common quandaries. These pertain to how much volunteers can or should speak; to what extent echoing skills can be useful; which venues are best suited for AL interactions (home visits versus open-café style interactions etc.); to what extent volunteers can be held responsible for maintaining long-term relationships with their clients; to what extent can volunteers become useful for clients; and why AL coaches bring authoritative qualities such as strict do's and don'ts to AL practices. Such dilemmas can be frustrating for AL volunteers, but they also motivate them to improve their listening skills in order to become more professional and responsible within the context of their volunteering. In addition, volunteers tend to think that

clients are old people who do not have agencies and need help, especially emotional support, and that these old people will be able to have a better life through being properly heard by someone. This assumption, in turn, motivates the volunteers to help their clients, solidifying and buttressing their identities as competent listeners.

How much AL volunteers identify with their work is shown by how they draw a clear line between AL volunteering and conversation volunteering (*ohanashi aite no borantia*) [xxviii]. Conversation volunteers do not necessarily learn AL skills, but instead will have the same kind of conversations with elderly people. Therefore, AL volunteers' activities could be characterised as conversation volunteering, but they proudly emphasise that they are *keichō* (AL) volunteers. This form of identification often allows them to rigidly cling to their roles as listeners, and thereby lose their flexibility within conversations. For example, one day in February, in a lecture organised by a city council for social welfare, a woman in her 60s asked a typical question: 'I learnt that we (volunteers) should not talk much. But in reality, some speakers (clients) asked me about myself and my opinion. Should I talk in that case?' Iwamatsu, a male AL coach in his 50s, answered, 'It depends on the aims of your volunteering group'. His point was that there are two types of volunteering: AL volunteering and conversation volunteering. In principle, an AL listener does not offer advice or speak up, but conversation volunteers can do as their aims differ. In his opinion, the aims of AL volunteering nowadays resemble conversation volunteering, therefore they would be better advised to share their own private stories or opinions if and when required. This common question reveals that those volunteers' identities as skilful listeners lead them to embody and remain within listener positions and therefore obstruct natural conversations. Indeed, these aspects reflect volunteers' identities as competent and responsible listeners.

On the other hand, why are clients unable just to accept volunteers' listening as one-sided support? Although there is a fundamental social rule of reciprocity, it is possible for clients simply to accept the service because they know it is charitable. Clients can have several emotional motives for reciprocation. First, it can be *mōshiwakenasa*, which means feeling sorry at the same time as appreciating something. In studies on the elderly, scholars often report that elderly people have this emotion, for instance 'Feeling sorry for asking it because caregivers are always busy' or 'Feel sorry for bothering caregivers' (Hirakawa 2011; Narumi *et al*. 2018; Suzuki 2016; Tejima 1999).

[xxviii] Conversation volunteering started in the 1980s. However, these days, it is difficult to find conversation volunteering. Conversation volunteering has largely been displaced by AL volunteering.

AL clients appreciate that their volunteers listen to them at the same time as feeling sorry for troubling the volunteers. This emotion does not relate to the fear or uneasiness of being put in an inferior position or becoming helpees, but simply as a social rule clients feel a necessity to reciprocate.

Second, it can be a case of *nasakenasa*, which means feeling ashamed, feeling pity for oneself or feeling miserable. Geriatric nursing scholar Okinaka Yumi (2011) explains that *nasakenasa* is one of the common emotions that old people have and analyses that the words 'I feel pitiful because I am getting old' (*oita jibun ga nasakenai*) means 'Even if my body is difficult to move, I cannot give up my ideal way of life'. Okinaka includes the elements of acceptance of one's weakness and having resilience in the meaning of *nasakenasa*. This resilience can motivate AL clients to eliminate this feeling of getting weak. To eliminate it, the clients negotiate their relationships with AL volunteers. The negotiation for the clients includes both showing experienced, senior attitudes *and* performing reciprocal behaviour including teaching something, giving information or entertaining volunteers. In Morinaga-san's case, he might have felt *nasakenasa* as a senior, male figure getting help from younger, female volunteers (or he was able to enjoy the conversation because the volunteers were younger females.)

Third, it could be a matter of feeling dignified as being an experienced, knowledgeable and responsible senior, and having resistance towards being seen as a weak and dependent person. In this case, clients have not accepted their weakness, unlike in *nasakenasa*. These clients' dignity also brings the negotiation of power dynamics. The negotiation for clients consists of matters of attitude and reciprocity, like *nasakenasa*, while the clients might be more likely to attempt to become givers.

The latter two emotional motives of *nasakenasa* and resilience can threaten clients' self-esteem if they cannot negotiate power dynamics with volunteers. Moreover, although the above are all different motives, all three eventually generate the same necessity of fulfilling a social obligation of reciprocity.

In comparison to hostess-customer reciprocity, AL clients can be more likely to feel *mōshiwakenasa* or *nasakenasa*, because their reciprocity does not involve visible exchanges such as a monetary exchange. Customers in hostess clubs pay money as an exchange for a fun time with hostesses and drinking alcohol. So they reciprocate by a very visible return gift and it is an explicit rule of exchange in these clubs. On the other hand, AL clients' reciprocity could be very subtle,

and it is an implicit social manner. Therefore, the AL clients are more likely to feel unease with the social exchange, while customers in hostess clubs can avoid such emotions. However, this does not mean that reciprocity between hostesses and customers are easily balanced. Their relationships sometimes include romantic or quasi-romantic relationships, and hostesses' emotional labour consists of social and emotional values, all of which makes it difficult to calculate balanced reciprocity and relationships.

The third point – clients' dignity and resilience – is sometimes overlooked by AL volunteers, because volunteers tend to assume that clients have no agency and need help through listening. This assumption about elderly people is a typical image people can have. Palmore (1990:20) suggests that the major nine stereotypes of elders which reflect negative prejudice include 'illness, impotency, ugliness, mental decline, mental illness, uselessness, isolation, poverty, and depression'. Mental decline, uselessness and isolation are scene settings that are often assumed in AL workshops and self-help literature on AL. Gerontologist Spector-Mersel Gabriela (2006:75) also explains that age-segregation and homogenisation complementarily generate the stereotype of non-productive, dependent and ungendered elders. In the age-segregation process, ageing as a natural life event has been altered into a distinct period of life characterised by weakness, obsolescence, dependence, physical decline and mental deterioration (Hareven 1995:118). In addition, the tendency of homogenisation towards elder people depersonalised them by depriving of individuals' characteristics, race and gender (Spector-Mersel 2006:75; Wilson 1995:99). In the Japanese context, these negative stereotypes change to the positive ones – such as being kind or wise – when people get older and pass middle-age (45–64) (Okumura and Kuze 2008). Why, then, do AL volunteers who are most likely to be over 65 assume their clients are weak and need help? This is probably because AL theory, literature and workshops presuppose situations in which elders seek help, struggle over something or have mental issues. This assumption can lead both volunteers to intensify their helping desire and clients to feel that they are receiving charity which they find undignified and which precipitates numerous misunderstandings.

In fact, not all clients will necessarily seek help or emotional support. Some of them only hope to have casual chats with volunteers or to make friends, while others are recommended to meet AL volunteers by staff members in nursing homes or local care managers and are not terribly interested in or enthusiastic about AL themselves. Kondō, a female volunteer in her late 60s, recalled an episode in a nursing home where her client was baffled because that client was brought

to the meeting place by a staff member and suddenly told to speak with the volunteer. Some clients find it difficult to decline volunteers' kindness, so continue with the conversation. Therefore, the de facto assumption that AL clients are in need of help might offend clients for whom AL volunteering is neither attractive nor desirable. After all, AL volunteers have to be sensitive to the possibility that there are clients who cannot directly express their need for conversation, and that there are also, by contrast, undoubtedly many clients who appreciate volunteers' help. However, volunteers need to understand clients' needs to retain dignity in AL interfaces and to engage in reciprocal behaviour.

In the case above the volunteer and the client continued searching for a comfortable relationship. Even though they were often shown to be kind to one another, the self-concept as being an AL volunteer and the dignity as an independent senior person were sometimes incompatible in the AL interface. When AL communication is framed by only listener-speaker and helper-helpee relationships, some clients cannot fully appreciate volunteers' listening.

In the following case, a volunteer flexibly provided space to create the relationship with a client collaboratively. The volunteer's flexibility also informed his conscious attitude of accepting reciprocal hints from his client. As a result, they were able to preserve an appropriate power dynamic.

I accompanied Okada twice, he was a 91-year-old male volunteer in Fukurō with 9 years of experience. For two years, he had been visiting Komine-san, who was a 90-year-old male client with medium-level dementia. Okada used to work in the office of a machine manufacturing company in Tokyo and started AL volunteering at aged eighty-one. Komine-san used to work as a teacher in elementary schools.

The first time, we arrived at a small care home in late February at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Okada greeted a staff member and entered a small guest room, in which a table was placed in the middle of the room, surrounded by four chairs, a waist-high shelf and a hanger rack, but no windows. We took off our coats and waited for Komine-san.

At 2:10, Komine-san entered the room with some papers gripped in his hand, and Okada and I stood up. Komine-san said to Okada, 'Yoh!', raising his right hand, to which Okada replied after the same fashion, as if they were old friends. Komine-san's back was very hunched, and he wore a shirt, a winter suit and glasses. Because of his moderate dementia, he was able to communicate

verbally, though had some difficulty recalling his past and recent memories, often repeating the same stories. Okada introduced me to him, explaining, 'She wants to learn AL, so please take care of her.' I was not sure if Komine-san understood this, but he said, 'Welcome!' (*dōzo!*).

Seating himself at the table, Komine-san said, 'I was called to come here because the member of staff said to me that my guest (*okyaku-san*) is waiting for me. Here you are.' He continued, 'Then, today, to whom should I speak?', meaning Okada or me. Okada said, 'Please tell your story to Nanase.' This exchange revealed the uncertainty of whether Komine-san recognised Okada either as a listening volunteer or someone who wanted to listen to his story. He started talking about how he ended up being a teacher, his experience as a director of an elementary school, and the time he was invited to a reunion party by his old students. He talked a lot as if lecturing us, without allowing questions.

He showed us the papers he had brought, on which he had written down his own life philosophy, featuring aphorisms (*hyōgen*) such as 'two minds but one body' – people desire so many things but have only one body. He explained each aphorism one by one, and, in the end, gave me these papers, for which I thanked him. Okada later told me, 'I also received various papers from Komine-san. It is good to receive these if he wants to give them.'

As a listener Okada sat back in his chair and was very relaxed. He gave a very subtle smile now and then and always looked at Komine-san. He did *aizuchi* – sometimes lightly or deeply, but only asked two questions. He later told me that Komine-san is a rare person who talks a lot without being prompted with questions. This tendency probably resulted from his previous occupation as a teacher. Speakers' backgrounds will often influence their way of speaking with volunteers. Okada had already heard all of Komine-san's stories, though he did not point out Komine-san's repetitions.

At 3 o'clock, Okada said, 'Komine-san, it is time for us to go home. Your staff are waiting for you as well. I will see you again next month.' He stood up and put on his coat, but Komine-san seemed to want to talk more, mumbling something. I followed what Okada did. Okada exited the room and waited for Komine-san to come to the entrance, where Okada and I thanked him and left. Later, Okada told me that he had to exit the room quickly; otherwise, Komine-san would not have stopped talking. Okada had found this difficult at the beginning, but now he knew that was what he had to do.

In the middle of March, Okada and I visited Komine-san again. When we entered the entrance, Komine-san was walking towards the guest room. Komine-san and Okada said, 'Yoh!' to each other. Okada said to Komine-san, 'You remember Nanase, don't you?' to which Komine-san replied, 'Oh!'

Without being asked questions, Komine-san said, 'Today, yes, let me start with my experience!' It seemed that Komine-san thought we were going to visit him to listen to his lecture. He had a desire to teach or take care of people and Okada accepted it. When Komine-san started to say something, we suddenly heard a piano playing from the main hall. Okada said, 'Komine-san can play the piano, right? Why don't you tell us how you came to play the piano?' Komine-said, 'Yes, and I am good at singing as well.' He talked about why he learnt to play the piano and why he chose to be a teacher etc. When the pianist started playing *Hotaru no hikari* (a Japanese version of the Scottish song Auld Lang Syne, which used to be sung in graduation ceremonies in Japanese schools), Komine-san sang a little bit too. He said, 'I sang this song today before coming here, and one of the female residents praised me for being such a good singer.' At this point, a member of staff brought us cups of coffee.

As we had the coffee Komine-san talked about the female resident. She used to rely on Komine-san, frequently following him, visiting his room and asking him many questions. However, recently her daughter moved her to another nursing home. The previous time when I had met Komine-san, he had also talked about her a little and it sounded as if he had become tired of taking care of her. However, this time, he was clearly disappointed and shocked. He said, 'Her daughter came and took her!' From there he moved on to different topics, but kept coming back to talking about her again and again. At last he said, 'I am sad.' Okada replied, 'Yeah, you must be sad. It is a shame,' (*sorya samishī darōni. zannen datta ne*) and empathetically accepted Komine-san's feelings. Komine-san repeated the story again, and then Okada, who usually does not make comments, said, 'You must be sad, but please do not feel so down. You are a smart person, so you can make a fresh start.' (*samishī darō kedo, mā sonnani ochikomanai de. Komine-san ha atama no ii hito dakara, mata kirikaete ikeru sa*). This comment was not a common response that AL volunteers would offer to their clients. They were taught to refrain from cheering up or praising their clients. However, Komine-san seemed to appreciate Okada's natural and friendly encouragement. He moved on to talk about different topics, after which Okada said that it was time for us to leave.

Overall, for Komine-san, his relationship with Okada was that of comradeship and a friendly teacher-learner relationship, while for Okada it retained a helper-helpee structure, with some elements of friendship. Komine-san treated Okada not as a volunteer, but as a guest or friend who wanted to listen to his story. He treated me as a student who wanted to learn from him, which probably intensified his perception of himself as a teacher. Komine-san's former occupation probably helped him in keeping a speaker-listener relationship. His dementia might also have made him forget the fact that Okada was a volunteer/helper, so Komine-san could perform his desired role.

Okada acknowledged and accepted Komine-san's perceptions, behaving as if he was a friend by using the same casual language, mirroring Komine-san's greetings and trying to cheer him up. Their close age and same gender probably facilitated this comradery. Okada's flexible attitude led to the creation of open space in which Komine-san could perform as he wanted. This way of interacting enabled them to create their own balanced, collaborative relationship, instead of perpetually reminding Komine-san of the fact that the relationship revolves around a helper-helpee or listener-speaker dynamic.

In addition to opening up free space to build their flexible relationship, Okada's receiving behaviour was the other key to making the conversations smooth. Okada realised the importance of receiving something from Komine-san, such as his lectures and papers carrying his life philosophy. Komine-san prepared his conversations in advance; his caring behaviour allowed him to become a giver. As a consequence, although there was a gap in their understanding of the positions, Okada and Komine-san's alliance was strengthened through sharing time and the stories.

In this section, the two case-studies of Hasegawa-san and Komine-san reveal the importance of allowing reciprocity in an AL relationship, and of finding suitable relationships collaboratively. The first example has revealed the case where the volunteer and client found an uncomfortable and unbalanced relationship. The volunteer kept giving therapeutic listening as a helper and kindly declined the offer from the client to speak up more or to create an open-minded friendship. This refusal obstructed the development of social ties, and denied the client's self-respect. The second example has demonstrated a case where a volunteer successfully offered free space for a client to perform his desired role, which enabled them to create their own balanced relationship. The volunteer also understood the significance of receiving behaviour, and, therefore, he listened to the client's lecture and received papers the client had prepared. These cases have illustrated the

significance of reciprocity (which extends to volunteers demonstrating a willingness to enjoy a conversation, as Akiyama and Nakajima showed, as was the case of Trust's open-café in the next section). They also suggest that such relationships should not be framed as listener-speaker and helper-helpee from the beginning, but flexibly open up the possibility of other types of relationships. For AL volunteers, these findings indicate the significance of not clinging too closely to their original mission – helping others without getting anything in return – and to their identities as skilled listeners.Therefore, remaining within the role of listener at all times does not necessarily make for good AL listeners.

My research confirms Nakanishi *et al*. (2009)'s insights from their research with AL clients, who commented that 'I cannot decline their visit if they want to offer it', 'They are just listening which is boring', and 'Our conversation does not get lively (*moriagaranai*)'. Based on this feedback, Nakanishi *et al*. propose to improve the situation of AL by providing skill-honing workshops for volunteers, changing the frequency of visits, appropriate matching and informing clients of the purpose of AL clearly etc. However, I found that the more volunteers focus on training skills, the more they become inflexible as concerns their role in the conversation. Flexibility to accept clients' reciprocal behaviour and having the intention to enjoy their conversations with clients or to gain something from the volunteering seem to be more important than following the script of AL techniques, improving skills and other factors.

Entertaining greater flexibility is not the only way volunteers can enable comfortable interactions in AL sessions. In the next section, I consider the conversational environment and the degree to which listeners intervene in the conversation.

4.4 Snack-bar style listening

The following two case-studies delineate circumstances in which there were differing conversational environments and degrees of volunteer participation and overall satisfaction both for volunteers and visitors vis-à-vis the conversations. In the first case, volunteers in an open-cafe enjoyed a cosy and bustling environment in which they were actively engaged in conversation, which eventually helped imbue the open-cafe with a flexible and comfortable dynamic. I named their volunteering 'snack-bar style volunteering', as their volunteering fitted the style of a snack-bar (a casual Japanese drinking establishment which is often run by an owner, called a 'Mama',

who engages in lively conversation with customers). The other group invited visitors to a spacious and quiet space and had less opportunity to engage with visitors, leading to the creation of hierarchical and uncomfortable relationships among visitors.

The first group, which I call Trust, has an open-cafe in Tokyo once every two weeks. A member of staff from the local council's social welfare department said, 'Trust is popular and has a different atmosphere from other groups.' I found two main reasons that Trust is said to be popular and comfortable for visitors; firstly, the space in which the group converses is cosy and crowded and secondly, volunteers are actively engaged in, or even intervene in conversations.

First, a confined environment contributes to the generation of intimate interactions. The venue is found on the ground floor of a building, about 75 square meters, and is a very small space. The venue belongs to the city council for social welfare and, because the space used to be a small *izakaya* (a Japanese gastropub/snack-bar), this space has a counter table and seats, a small kitchen, a raised-*tatami*-floor behind the counter table and wide windows with natural light. A calendar, small origami-fishes and a small toy water tank are on the counter table. Many posters are hung along the walls. On the *tatami* floor, two lower tables and sitting cushions have been placed. At the corner of the *tatami* floor, a coat hook and leaflet rack are on display. Volunteers offer small complimentary sweets, as well as a cup of coffee or green tea. Local visitors bring hand-made cakes or cookies to share. These small miscellaneous, decorations and snacks/drinks fill the space, which makes the place cosy. (I named these miscellaneous materials 'auxiliary artefacts'. See more details in Chapter 6.3).

Figure 9: Trust's open cafe space

The crowded environment generates closeness. Usually, about 10 volunteers in their 60s to late 70s (two males) and 10 visitors in their 60s to 90s (mixed gender, but women tend to be the majority) show up to Trust gatherings.

Compared with two other AL open cafe-style events that I have observed, Trust constantly has many regular visitors, which indicates an overall level of satisfaction among participants. Not only is the space filled with miscellaneous material objects, but it is crowded with the number of participants attending sessions.

In addition to the material idiosyncracy of the venue, there is a lively but comfortable noise level due to the confined space and the number of people who attend. I was easily able to eavesdrop on the conversation of the people sitting next to me when I attempted to do so. However, it would also have been possible for me to have a private conversation, due to the noisiness of the space.

The material saturation of the space, its human crowdedness and comfortable noise level all helped to create a lively atmosphere. In this situation, people seem to feel comfortable and at ease to speak freely and develop close bonds with their interlocutors.

The other main reason that Trust could offer successful listening experiences was owing to the volunteers' skilful engagement in interactions. Usually in this space, either dyadic or three- or four-people conversations naturally happened due to the narrowness of the room, not only between people sitting next to each other but also those sitting behind them, with people in the kitchen spaces and even among visitors. This dynamic happened not only naturally but also due to the efforts of volunteers. Volunteers gave visitors opportunities to speak by asking questions and changing topics, and sometimes controlled who took the floor in the conversation. Visitors were rarely left alone. This is possible because Trust always has at least 7 or 8 members in attendance. A male visitor in his 70s told me, 'I joined many AL events. In other open cafes, it is not always easy to join a conversation, because I had to attempt to involve myself independently in a conversation, which is difficult for me. However, here, I will never be left alone. Always one of the volunteers comes to talk [with me].' Visitors were not put under pressure to find a communicator here. However, this intervention does not aim at offering 100% satisfactory conversational services for visitors, unlike hostesses, but at providing opportunities to interact with others. The volunteers' efforts to generate a warm and casual dynamic in their interactions were inevitably successful.

The volunteers' intervention often succeeds because of skilful manipulation of their masks of silent authority as listeners. Volunteers displayed humility by using honorific language and submissive demeanours, in the form of hunched postures. One day, I was conversing with a new male visitor and he told me, 'Oh, every volunteer here adjusts their eye level lower than visitors'

eyes, don't you think so? Humble people, aren't they?' This was true. Every volunteer set their eyes about eye level with visitors by lowering their heads. Not only their minds but also their physical postures were adjusted to produce an atmosphere of humility, and downplay their position of power and authority as helpers. Hayashi, a man in his 40s working as a staff member in the local council's social welfare department, told me that there are about 20 AL volunteering groups in the city, and that each group has different members, styles, places and atmospheres. He pointed out that Trust's members are especially humble and friendly, saying 'they seem to be equal (*taitō*) with visitors. They do not entertain the visitors but communicate with them as if they are in *akachōchin* (another way of saying *izakaya*). They are good at finding common languages and topics.' Their friendly and humble behaviour was effective in concealing their identities as helpers.

Moreover, the volunteers enjoyed the time they spent in the cafe, which in turn contributed to the creation of a friendly and egalitarian atmosphere. They enjoyed having conversations with regular visitors as well as deriving pleasure from sharing the inviting and warm venue space with fellow volunteers. Their own enjoyment of the venue helped gloss over their role as helpers. For example, Yokoyama, a male volunteer in his 70s, said, 'Doing AL activities alone would be very hard sometimes, but, as a group, it can be fun.' The volunteers not only provided listening services to visitors but also seemed to enjoy this volunteering.

However, this reality did not mean that their helper identities were dismissed. Indeed, there was an implication that the volunteers were controlling the time and space the whole time, in carrying volunteer name tags, managing the temporal sequence of events (e.g. they encouraged everyone to do a mini exercise at the end of the open-cafe, and announced closing time) and dominating the kitchen space. Moreover, Yanagi, a woman in her 70s, told me that she did not feel like she could become friends with the visitors, as she felt that the volunteers and visitors probably did not consider the AL relationships as friendships, although the visitors become friends with one another. It would be more precise to note that the helper-helpee relationships were well-disguised on the surface as neighbourly relationships. This subtle closeness led to the emergence of a comfortable balance in the interactions.

Two main factors – being the cosy and bustling quality of the venue space, along with volunteers' active participation in the proceedings – allowed the AL open-cafe to resemble a hostess club in its functionality. In the case of Trust, this place does not look like an exclusive club but possesses the functionality of a drinking space. Hostesses and the volunteers are likewise often

actively engaged in conversations with their customers/visitors to contribute to the quality of the conversation. Trust's members seem to be similar to Mamas in a snack-bar, in terms of the interventions they make in conversations. I, therefore, named this type of successful volunteering 'snack-bar style listening'.

On the other hand, I encountered a situation in which a group discussion in an AL open-cafe would eventually generate a conversational hierarchy among visitors, due to the uncomfortable quality of the venue and the lack of intervention of volunteers.

At the beginning of March, I visited the group I call Hope in Tokyo. This group organises an open-café event once a month, and two volunteers involve themselves in turn. Before 10 am, I arrived at the fourth floor of a huge building and was greeted by two volunteers, both of whom were women in their 60s. I helped them in preparing tea for visitors.

Their open café is held in an open space on the fourth floor of a building, rather than inside a room. The space is separated from the corridor by partitioning boards. Two sides of the wall consist of partitioning boards, with the other sides of the space consisting of the wall of the building and huge windows which accept natural light. A big round table, which can accommodate about 15 people, and chairs are placed directly in the middle. The space is located diagonally opposite from the welfare department office of the city council, which restricts people from speaking loudly. There were no other people on the floor on the day I arrived, so it was quiet. Personally, I felt this space was not at all cosy, and the table was too big to feel closeness.
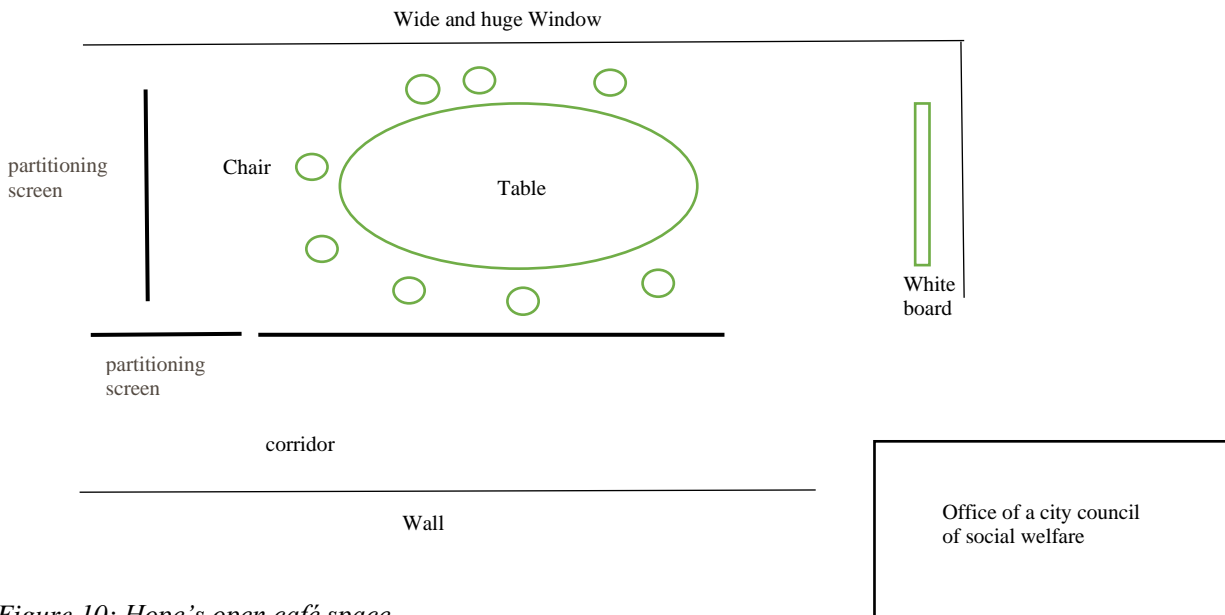

Figure 10: Hope's open café space

At about 10 am, five visitors, four women and one man, arrived and sat at the table. After everyone arrived, volunteers distributed cups of tea and introduced me to everyone. Then, in the first 30 minutes, people started to talk with a person sitting next to them and sometimes suddenly talked together at one table. They conversed about their grandsons and granddaughters, noxious insects, funerals, cremation and interment, graves, living costs, *tera-tomo* (friends whom you meet through the relationship as parishioners of the same temple) and exercise for health etc.

Halfway through, some of the visitors stopped speaking altogether. Because Tanaka-san, a woman in her 80s, was prone to talking a lot and sometimes interrupted others' talks, other visitors started getting frustrated. She was clearly dominating the conversation by speaking, which forced others to remain quiet. The two volunteers did not help with or intervene in this situation well, although, while leading small group conversations, they often did *aizuchi* and *unazuki*, and asked the visitors questions. Only once did one of the volunteers intentionally and exaggeratedly nod to the current speaker, (not Tanaka-san), in order for her to talk more. With this gentle prod the speaker succeeded in keeping up speaking. However, Tanaka-san started talking again. When a woman in her 70s was speaking softly, Tanaka-san interrupted her. At that, a woman in her 90s loudly said, 'Hey, listen to her! She's speaking now'. Tanaka-san stopped talking for a while but soon began to speak again.

At the end of the session, the volunteers suggested that everyone talk about anything they had wanted to discuss but had not yet had the opportunity to do so. The visitors happily shared their thoughts one by one with the whole group. The volunteers then announced that the café was closed, at which point everyone went home. However, while two volunteers were writing their report, a 92-year-old woman came back to the table and started talking about her current life to the volunteers. They seemed a bit reluctant to listen to her. It was obvious that the woman was not able to talk enough in the group conversation and had been frustrated.

In this case, maintaining a balanced relationship fell short. One person eventually dominated the conversation by speaking for a long time and interrupting the others. Two reasons can account for this situation; firstly, the type of space and secondly, the level of volunteers' engagement. The environment was spacious and quiet, which probably does not allow communicators to stay only in dyadic or three people conversations. The environment seems to lend itself to table-group conversation instead. This is because, firstly, people can clearly hear what others talk about and tend to jump in to join others' conversations; and secondly, the setting created slightly isolated

sitting positions, which are not conducive to an atmosphere of closeness being generated among interlocutors. A group conversation would be possible as an AL activity; however, the roles of the listener would be the key to managing the power balance. As in this example, without proper intervention, a big group conversation is unable to distribute opportunities for everyone fairly to talk and to develop intimacy. All of this created an uncomfortable hierarchy in their interaction.

In summary, two examples have revealed the importance of environment and the proactive roles of listeners' intervention in conversations in contributing to the success of AL volunteering. In the first example, the volunteers created a comfortable space distinguished by crowdedness and noise, and the provision of snacks and beverages to attendees. Volunteers at Trust were actively engaged in conversations and controlled the amount of time clients could speak, or the topics they could explore. Their authoritarian intervention was well concealed by their humble and friendly demeanours and their enjoyment in interaction. I named their volunteering snack-bar style listening. In the second case-study, however, the environment in which the sessions were held was too spacious and quiet to allow for small, discrete and intimate conversations. As a result, visitors tended to have big group conversations, which eventually led one visitor to developing conversational dominance. This result was also brought by a lack of volunteers' intervention. These two examples have demonstrated the significance of the conversational environment and of volunteers' active engagement in group interactions in the case of AL volunteering.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analysed the meaning of listening offered by AL volunteers and the power relations in AL interactions. For volunteers, listening is a tool for reaching out to elderly people and is an altruistic gift. Unlike hostesses, they do not anticipate any returns. However, although volunteers' humble listening functions well to mask their silent authority, it does not change their ultimate position as helpers. Helpers' devoted listening unintentionally makes their clients stay in helpee/subordinate positions. This fact reflects the intrinsic nature of a gift; it obliges receivers to reciprocate or to accept a position of subordination. Therefore, after being listened to by volunteers, some clients attempted to reciprocate, through entertaining volunteers, providing useful information in turn, teaching them their life philosophy, preparing in advance topics of discussion for the meeting, and encouraging volunteers to speak up. Volunteers and clients,

therefore, constantly negotiated their power balance in subtle ways in order to create comfortable, balanced relations.

This principle of reciprocity pointed to the importance of the receiving behaviour of listeners. Volunteers' refusal of reciprocal approaches from clients could prevent them from developing mutual ties and put clients in a position where it is difficult to fulfil their social obligations and maintain their self-respect. This situation could happen due to a lack of understanding concerning the importance of reciprocity in interactions; volunteers' strong self-concept as competent listening volunteers, which originally derived from their kindness; or a lack of understanding of clients' dignity. On the other hand, when a volunteer flexibly accepted a client's giving behaviour and did not cling to their mission to help others by AL, they were more likely to create their own balanced relationships. Therefore, a good listener was found to interact reciprocally in some ways and create their own collaborative relations, rather than framing conversations as being formed by listener-speaker or helper-helpee relationships alone.

Finally, I have compared two open-cafes and pointed out two aspects of successful conversation in group interactions: the environment in which volunteering activities are held, and the degree to which volunteers actively engage with or intervene in conversations. As an environment, the cosiness of the space, the crowdedness in terms of people and the use of material objects (auxiliary artefacts) and a certain level of noise lead to comfortable interactions. Conversely, a spacious, quiet environment with fewer people is more likely to create uncomfortable communications. Volunteers' interventions, through distributing opportunities for others to talk with them or changing topics to speak out to influence the dynamics of conversations, proved especially useful in managing power balances among communicators.

Compared to the norms of self-help guides, I would like to set out four main points. Self-help literature does not explicitly instruct on the role of reciprocity in conversations, but rather overemphasises the importance of people remaining in listener positions, regardless of the particularities of the situation. This leads to the second point, which is that self-help books often overlook the principle of flexibility in interactions in allowing communicators to take on different roles in interactions in order to adjust a power balance. As Okada shows, a listener sometimes performs as a volunteer/caregiver, friend or learner, and sometimes combined these several roles to use both therapeutic and zealous listening at the same time. A third important point to consider is that no self-help literature on AL teaches that listeners should enjoy conversations, but

emphasises instead that conversations with AL should revolve around helping others and/or winning favour. In reality, however, listeners' enjoyment makes speakers more relaxed, as it shows that speakers have opportunities to give something back, which relates to the first point. Finally, both manuals and some volunteers consider practical aspects of conversational environments, such as the lighting or seating arrangement. However, volunteers' examples reveal more details concerning this aspect, such as the necessity of having a cosy space, and a comfortable level of crowdedness and noise. They also disclose the significance of skilful management of group conversations, unlike the self-help literature.

Although AL volunteering and hostesses listen in very different circumstances, both parties face the same issue: the handling of power relations. This always leads to both volunteers and hostesses becoming involved in a core role for listeners: emotional labour. How do these parties set about offering emotional work? In what ways do they control their emotions and listening behaviour at the same time? In the next chapter, I analyse examples of listeners' emotional labour.

Chapter 5. Listening as emotional labour

Hostesses and AL volunteers listen for different purposes, in different environments; the former ultimately attempt to earn money in a clear hierarchy with a lot of drinking, while the latter try altruistically to help elderly people to feel less lonely, and without the involvement of money or alcohol. However, crucially, both have to deal with power relations in their roles as listeners.

They have another aspect in common: they both provide emotional labour. 'Emotional labour' is defined, in a pioneering work by sociologist Arlie Hochschild (2012:7) as the labour which 'requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others'. Hostesses and AL volunteers perform emotional labour because they are responsible for optimising customers'/clients' satisfaction or comfort, such as feeling understood or respected, or feeling less lonely.

I use the word 'labour' for volunteers' activities too even though they do not receive a wage. Hochschild (2012:7) uses the term 'emotional labour' when 'it is sold for a wage therefore has exchange value' and employs the terms 'emotion work' or 'emotion management' when referring to 'these same acts done in a private context where they have use value'. However, through carrying out quantitative research on crisis line volunteers, psychologist Patricia Karsten (2015:V) states that volunteers' work is located somewhere between paid service interactions and private relationships. AL volunteers and their clients' relationships are not completely private either. Therefore, I refer to their 'emotion work' as emotional labour.

As hostesses and AL volunteers often stay in the role of the listener, their emotional labour heavily influences their ways of listening. In this sense, listening is a subset of emotional labour and the two are inseparable in a conversation. Even listeners in a conversational situation, in general, cannot avoid emotion work because they more or less aim to produce a certain state of mind in others during conversation. Therefore, skilful emotional labour and emotion work are crucial to becoming a good listener.

Listeners' emotional labour is under-recognised. This is because, first, their emotional labour involves controlling inward feelings, which is invisible to others. Moreover, they adjust their outward expressions and behaviour, which is a part of their emotional labour as listeners, but their behaviour and attitudes are often subtle and unassertive, in spite of their hard work. In reality, as I will explain in this chapter, listeners engage in a variety of emotional labour while listening. For

example: waiting for a turn to speak and suppressing a desire to speak; continuing to listen even if they are feeling bored; or showing the required facial expressions and generating cheerful emotion. Listeners often suppress their emotions and evoke certain feelings in order to become better listeners or at least to fit a situation. Another important act of emotional labour is *kūki o yomu*, including reading and predicting the emotions of others before suppressing or inducing the listener's own feelings. This requires listeners to have various imaginations and calculations in their minds.

In this chapter, I will revisit the listening of both hostesses and AL volunteers and investigate their emotional labour and how this affects their ways of listening. First, I will describe two types of core emotional labour for them: *yorisou* and *kizukai*. From that, I will analyse their emotional labour in difficult situations.

5.1 Satisfying emotional labour: creating affection by *yorisou* and *kizukau*

5.1.1 Emotional labour by *yorisou*

The most typical and core emotional labour in AL volunteering is *yorisou*. *Yorisou* (verb) and *yorisoi* (noun)[xxix] mean getting close enough to be in physical contact (*motare kakaru yō ni soba e yoru*) defined by Digital Daijisen (Shogakkan online, accessed June 2019), as standing by, emotionally snuggling up, accepting what is said unconditionally (Shibuya 2010:35; Saitō 2012:86), or reading and feeling a speaker's emotions (Hiraki 2013:39; Iwamatsu 2014:114; Sawamura 2015:36). So *yorisou* indicates emotional closeness. *Yorisou* could also mean being with someone. For example, Yanagi, a woman in her 70s in Trust said: 'Even if a person cannot speak, a good listener can stand by the person, which is *yorisou*.' While standing by someone, a person still provides emotional labour without words, such as reading and imagining someone's emotion and becoming empathetic. Other AL coaches similarly mention this too. Therefore, *yorisou* consists of reading and predicting someone's feeling and desire, becoming empathetic (putting oneself in others' shoes), and showing and controlling emotional attachment and

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[xxix] AL volunteers often use the verb form (*yorusou*), rather than the noun form (*yorisoi*), therefore I use the verb form in this chapter.

detachment. Because the role of AL volunteers is having a conversation, especially becoming a listener, their emotional labour often influences their ways of listening.

How does *yorisou* happen in AL volunteering? One day in April, I encountered a case where Eguchi-san, a male visitor in his 70s, needed help in the form of listening and Yokoyama, an experienced male volunteer at the Trust's open-café, also in his 70s, offered masterly *yorisou* through his listening. Eguchi-san had visited the Trust's cafe several times since his mother's death in Autumn 2017 and had conversed with Yokoyama two or three times. I do not know Eguchi-san's former occupation, but Yokoyama used to work as a probation officer in a family court, supporting many adolescents with his work. Through listening to them, he sometimes experienced specific moments when he felt he touched the core of these adolescents' minds, which led him to participating in several volunteering groups after retirement.

The room was full of people as usual and there was a comfortable level of hubbub. Natural light came through the windows. I sat at the edge of the raised *tatami* floor. Eguchi-san sat next to me. Yokoyama brought a small chair to sit in front of us.

Yokoyama said hello, smiled at Eguchi-san and introduced me to him as a student who wanted to learn to volunteer. Eguchi-san matter-of-factly said, 'Oh, yes, hello', and seemed not to be bothered by my presence. Yokoyama asked him, 'How have you been? How do you feel now?' Eguchi-san answered, 'I am still thinking about what actually happened when my mother died.' He explained his doubts about the way she passed away in a nursing home and what happened on the day. He turned the subject back to how he took care of his mother both at home and in the nursing home, often using the phrase 'I regret...' as if he could have done more for his mother. Yokoyama had already listened to these stories several times but listened to him as if he was listening to the story for the first time. He empathetically nodded, voiced *aizuchi* a lot, and looked sad, all of which encouraged Eguchi-san to talk more. Yokoyama is a tall man but he bent forward so that his eyes were about level with Eguchi-san's.

Eguchi-san explained why he started coming to the Trust's cafe. He said: 'A few days after my mother's death, I was wandering around my neighbourhood at night and stopped by a police station. Entering there, I found myself talking about my mother's death to a young police officer for two hours. I probably needed someone who could listen to me. After this incident, I have been visiting several AL open cafés, which were recommended by a member of staff in a local council's

social welfare department. I feel that Trust is the most comfortable one for me.' Then he repeated the story about his mother and his doubt.

After an hour of listening, Yokoyama started to comment on Eguchi-san's talk, using a soft voice, a subtle smile and phrases such as 'Your mother must have been happy. I really admire you because I did not treat my own mother like you did', 'I reckon that from now on you are allowed to enjoy yourself, aren't you?' or 'But...It has been only six months since your mother's death, I think you are still allowed to feel down'. Eguchi-san replied, 'But....', and repeated his story.

In the last 30 minutes, Eguchi-san explained a change that had happened to him. He said: 'I know I am telling the same stories repeatedly...but recently I realised that I started talking about other things too. I am now worrying about the forms related to my mother's inheritance...' He talked about his current issues. Yokoyama commented, 'Have you talked about it with a lawyer?' Eguchi-san replied, 'Yes, but...' and explained his current struggles.

Towards the end of the conversation, Eguchi-san expressed appreciation that the Trust's members listened to him kindly and repeatedly. He said: 'My heart becomes a little bit calmer because they listened to me' (*kiite moratte kokoro ga sukoshi ochitsuki mashita*). Eguchi-san's facial expression changed from neutral to a subtle smile at this point. By now, it was almost time to close the cafe. Eguchi-san thanked Yokoyama and left.

Overall, Yokoyama provided emotional labour by *yorisou*. In order to make Eguchi-san feel at ease, he evoked an empathetic feeling by putting himself in Eguchi-san's shoes and speculated regarding Eguchi-san's current situation and feelings. His emotional labour influenced his attitude as a listener, and thus he offered therapeutic listening. He endured listening to the same story, performed as if he was hearing it for the first time, gave *aizuchi* and nodded his head frequently, showed sad and happy expressions to indicate his attentiveness, bent forward to display his humble attitude, and softened his voice to demonstrate his caring attitude. He also controlled emotional attachment and detachment: he gave empathetic comments while drawing a line between volunteer and client by using 'I-messages' like 'I think you are…' or 'I did not treat my mother...', to maintain a proper psychological distance.

Through aiming at *yorisou* in their listening, volunteers often induce empathy and kindness in their minds, and suppress or discard emotions of boredom, confusion or tiredness. Yokoyama recalled the situation with Eguchi-san, saying: 'For the first time I heard his story, I was so touched that I cried. So what I respond to him was always sincere, but, of course, listening to the same

stories again and again made me tired and even bored.' Yokoyama managed his emotions while listening.

Yokoyama's emotional experience discloses two types of emotional labour: deep- and surface-acting. Hochschild (2012:33) terms 'deep-acting' as deceiving or changing one's own mind as much as others while displaying natural and genuine emotions which align with organisational requirements; conversely, 'surface-acting' is defined as producing the required surface display without changing one's own actual emotion. Yokoyama, on the one hand, listened to Eguchi-san by showing the socially required behaviour and emotions such as asking caring questions, positing kind opinions and looking sad while sincerely generating caring emotions and discarding tiredness and boredom. On the other hand, Yokoyama sometimes listened to him by displaying socially desired expressions while admitting to his tiredness and boredom. I term the former way of listening 'deep-acting listening' and the latter 'surface-acting listening'. These concepts help in understanding the different ways in which listeners perform emotional labour while listening. AL volunteers move between deep- and surface-acting listening from time to time, but they are more likely to embody deep-acting listening because they are socially expected to be genuine caregivers.

As a result of *yorisou* emotional labour, Yokoyama alleviated Eguchi-san's anxiety. Eguchi-san finally showed a subtle smile and said, 'My heart is a little bit calmer…' He trustingly relied on Yokoyama's benevolence. They established a solid helper-helpee relationship, which AL training courses and guides typically aim to achieve. Volunteers often gain confidence through this type of experience.

Yokoyama's case reveals the core of *yorisou* emotional labour: emotional attachment and detachment. As the definition of *yorisou* indicates, it is firstly characterised by building closeness. Listeners fulfil the closeness in several ways: through empathetic understanding (empathetic listening, *kyōkan teki rikai*), unconditional acceptance (*mujōken no juyō*) and forbidding criticising and advising. In particular, empathetic understanding, according to Rogers (1980:116), who is the most followed academic in terms of AL, means that 'the therapist senses accurately the feelings and personal meanings that the client is experiencing and communicates this understanding to the client. When functioning best, the therapist is so much inside the private world of the other that he or she can clarify not only the meanings of which the client is aware but even those just below the level of awareness'. As Rogers states, 'the therapist is so much inside the private world' of the

client's, which creates a high level of closeness. Moreover, practices – such as eye contact, *aizuchi*, *unazuki*, a variety of vocal and facial reactions, pacing/mirroring, having a smile, sitting next to each other, echoing, kind ways of replying and questioning techniques – also help in showing attentiveness and empathy, which eventually creates fondness. In these ways, listeners achieve closeness.

However, *yorisou* also gives the opposite impression, that people stand alone beside each other while being mentally and physically very close, as compared to the term '*yori kakaru*'. *Yori kakaru* means leaning on others and also connoting depending on others' power (Digital Dai-ji-sen). Therefore, y*orisou* implies one's independence. AL volunteers equate *yorisou* to 'dancing with', which also requires becoming independent in order to dance together. Volunteers attain this aspect through both empathetic understanding (*kyōkan teki rikai*) and the consistency in a listener's self, which is called 'congruence' (*jiko ittchi*) (Rogers 1980). Rogers (1951:29) argues that empathetic understanding is not 'emotional identification on the counsellor's part, but rather an empathic identification, where the counsellor is perceiving the hates and hopes and fears of the client through immersion in an empathic process, but without himself, as counsellor, experiencing those hates and hopes and fear.' Therefore, a counsellor draws a line to a client by empathetic understanding while not becoming psychologically assimilated with the speaker. The other detaching aspect is 'congruence', meaning keeping a stable relationship with a listener's own self or standing independently. Standing as an individual and maintaining a proper psychological distance from one another are significant parts of *yorisou*.

The disposition of *yorisou* – balancing closeness – can be traced back 200 years. Historian Kumakura Isao (2014:118–119) infers the possibility that people in Japan in the 18th or 19th century elaborated this way of communicating through reading manuals on manners or enjoying *renga* (a poem composed of lines linked and written by two or more persons). In particular, in *renga*, people honed the skill of making a close link with another's poetry but avoided becoming too similar. Similarly, Kuki Shūzō (1979) famously proposed the structure of *iki*, which is the aesthetic idea that two parties will attempt to be close while maintaining a tension between them, and never becoming assimilated. Hamaguchi (1982; 1985) also suggests a contextual man (*kanjin*) model, interpreting the Japanese way of communication in contrast to the groupism that was the dominant view since Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946). People in this model maintain organised relations with others and grow mutually inclusive and intimate

relationships while maintaining their own autonomy. This type of relationship requires people to deal with others sensitively with a proper psychological distance. *Yorisou* aligns with these concepts which have been in existence for a long time.

The concept of *amae* also aligns with these ideas, and particularly shares the similar dispositions of emotional attachment and detachment with *yorisou*. *Amae* was first described by psychoanalyst Doi Takeo (2007:4) as meaning a fundamental desire 'to depend on and presume upon another's love', or to rely on someone through being favoured. *Amaeru* is an intransitive verb and has 'the same root as *amai,* an adjective that means "sweet"' (Doi 2005:14), therefore *amae*, which is a noun form of *amaeru*, is sometimes translated as 'sweet interdependence' (Yamada 1997;xvii, 9)[xxx]. *Amae* became a major concept and predominant term of communication in Japan. This concept, however, has been criticised by many scholars because of the ambiguous definition and the emphasis on the uniqueness of Japanese communication (Maynard 1997:35; Nagayama 2001; Okonogi 1968; Sugimoto 2002:4; Taketomo 1988). Despite the criticism, *amae* is conceptualised and utilised by academics as a proficient way of controlling intimacy in everyday life (though not in psychoanalysis), and not depending on someone arbitrary[xxxi] (Doi 1961:197– 203; Nagayama 2001:92–93, 96–97; Okonogi Keigo 1968). In this sense, *yorisou* and *amae* possess similar dispositions of balancing closeness.

On the one hand, *amae* is characterised by emotional attachment, such as a desire of identification (*dōitsuka*) with the other party or of assimilation (*sesshu*) (Doi 1973:45). These can be manifested in the form of over-familiar attitudes, for example, communicating in order to draw the attention of a target communicator (1971:288–289). This aspect of nurturing intimacy is the same characteristic as *yorisou*.

On the other hand, *amae* has an aspect of distancing from the other party, like *yorisou*. Researchers, including Doi, point out that *amae* is possible if one keeps one's own psychological independence. Doi (1961:197–203) refers to '*sunao na amae*' (genuine *amae*) as not a union (of

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[xxx] Although in British English 'sweet' has the connotation of cute or *kawaii*, the definition does not include this meaning. In British English, 'tender' might be a better word to translate *amae*.

[xxxi] In English, *amae* is translated both as 'depending on' and as 'relying on'. However, 'depending on' precisely means to 'be controlled or determined by' and connotes to 'wait or be in suspense', while 'relying on' means to 'depend on with full trust or confidence' and also indicates to 'associate with or gather together' (Oxford Dictionary of English online, accessed 7.2019). The former shows passiveness and the latter expresses an active decision to trust someone. Doi (1973) includes both meanings to analyse the phenomenon of *amae* both in psychoanalysis and everyday life, which is one of the reasons confusion and criticism have arisen in regard to the broad definition of *amae*.

communicators) but as a unity that consists of differentiating oneself from others. However, Doi says *sunao na amae* differs from *amae* in everyday life. Critically developing Doi's idea, psychiatrist Nagayama Keiichi (2001:92–97) proposes '*tanpaku na amae*' that can be found in everyday life and means that rather than clinging to someone, one communicates while holding one's own self to find interpersonal space and humour in conversations. This *tanpaku na amae* is what psychiatrist Okonogi Keigo (1968) is referring to when he argues *amae* in everyday life is a sophisticated way of engaging in affectionate interaction based on individuals' separate selves. Nagayama also discusses that *amae* always covers a wide spectrum, indicating different levels of reliance from '*tanpaku na amae*' to '*nōkō na amae*' (heavier *amae* such as *suneru* (sulk) or *nedaru* (begging)). Therefore, a person who does *amaeru* attempts and adjusts both to become closer and to keep an emotional distance from the other party, like a person who does *yorisou*. People, including AL volunteers, no longer use the concept of *amae*, or use it only in a negative sense while they often use *yorisou* when explaining healthy interaction. Therefore it seems that the concept of *yorisou* has replaced the concept of *amae*[xxxii].

However, although generating the same type of relationships, the way to build closeness in *yorisou* and *amae* involves a critical difference. The former often means letting someone rely on you, while the latter means one relies on someone else. This difference is well shown in a conventional way in which people use *yorisou* in the sense of helping others. For example, various kinds of volunteers use this word to name their group or to explain their volunteering. Sony corporations introduce devices like a radio or speaker under the advertising slogan '*Yorisou* Sony, *sotto anata no mainichi ni*' (gently/lightly stand by your everyday life) (*Sony* online, accessed October 2019). A funeral company called *Yorisou* says they assist better choices and the ideal departure (*Yorisou* online, accessed October 2019). In Emperor Naruhito's enthronement, he pledged, '…*kokumin ni yorisoi nagara*' (while standing by people) (NHK World-Japan online, accessed October 2019), meaning that he becomes thoughtful about people and puts himself in people's shoes as the symbol of the state. Thus, he declares his promise of engaging in emotional labour by *yorisou*. The common nuance of these examples is helping or supporting others through standing by the other party; therefore *yorisou* is the emotional labour of people in power, although

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[xxxii] Definitions of *Amae* often only focus on the trait of dependency, but detaching signifies an important aspect of *amae,* therefore *amae* is better translated as benevolent (or sweet) (inter-)independence in contemporary Japan, rather than as 'sweet interdependence' as Yamada (1997;xvii, 9) describes.

the compassionate image of the word conceals this fact [xxxiii]. In the case of Eguchi-san and Yokoyama, Eguchi-san did *amaeru* to Yokoyama, and Yokoyama did *yorisou*, in other words, he was *amae rareru* (being relied upon), interacting with Eguchi-san through his deft management of intimacy. They became close but held on to their independence.

The perspective of volunteers' *yorisou* behaviour has shown the way in which volunteers carry out emotional labour: especially as listeners they managed emotional attachment and detachment towards their clients. *Yorisou* shared the same characteristics and relational consequences with *amae*, however, while *yorisou* means letting another person rely on one, *amae* implies one relies on someone else. So, the concept of *yorisou* is revealed as a type of emotional labour by those who are in giving positions.

5.1.2 Emotional labour by *kizukai*

Hostesses say that an ideal hostess is a person who can do *kizukai*. *Kizukai* (noun), *kizukau* (verb)[xxxiv] means understanding a person or a current situation, being thoughtful about it, and predicting a need and offering to satisfy it ahead of receiving a request. A need can be physical, material or psychological. For example, lighting a customer's cigarette immediately, wiping water-drops on a glass, giving extra tissue paper to a customer when he blows his nose, giving a customer a hot towel after coming back from the bathroom, folding a customer's towel neatly, folding the top of the toilet paper into a triangle shape for the next user, holding a customer's bag while he puts a coat on, or giving a customer an umbrella if it seems to be raining; all are *kizukai*. Mental support is also important *kizukai*, such as observing a customer's subtle facial expression and asking about it, or remembering a conversation in detail. *Kizukai* is everywhere and relates to everyone, including customers, hostesses and members of staff. Running a hostess club business in Ginza involves surviving in a *kizukai* competition. *Kizukai* behaviour upholds the high level of service and communication in Ginza clubs.

In the following case, hostesses performed *kizukai* as listeners. One day in April, Tachibana-san, a regular customer in his 70s, visited the club. He was grumpy at the beginning, as usual. While making drinks, three hostesses, including me, tried to fill the silence with questions such as

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[xxxiii] *Amayakasu* (to indulge someone) could be similar to *yorisou* in the sense of letting others rely on, but *amayakasu* does not have an element of detachment.
[xxxiv] Hostesses often use the word in the noun form (*kizukai*) rather than the verb (*kizukau*), unlike *yorisou* (verb), therefore I use the noun form in this chapter.

'You have been drinking, haven't you?' or 'What did you eat for dinner tonight?' We also teased him for having a name tag around his neck, which made him look like a child in a kindergarten. After five minutes, he started talking about things like his experiences in other clubs, the reason he cannot have mistresses now and his relationships with girls in childhood. Although the hostesses already knew most of his stories, no one mentioned this, not even half-jokingly. We dug into these stories, attempting to learn more details. In the meantime, we praised him as a popular man with girls, using a typical phrase '*moteru*' (being popular, especially romantically attractive), such as 'You must have been really popular with the girls!' or 'I see, so that's why you get so much interest from women!' Although he is a successful man, owning a huge group of companies and having a family, he still enjoys being praised as being popular with girls. I remembered that the last time I conversed with him, he was so happy to be told, 'You are really a compassionate person' (*jō ni atsui hito desune*) that I repeated it. He looked really happy, saying, 'Yeah, I am always like that!'

The hostesses' behaviour exhibited *kizukai*. We read the atmosphere – in other words, Tachibana-san's current emotion and need – presumed the need for a lively mood, and became cheerful and attentive. In our minds, we evoked cheerful, caring and respectful feelings, repressed boredom and tiredness, and regulated our opinions and emotions in order not to offend him. Our emotional labour influenced our listening behaviour. We smiled to indulge Tachibana-san, asked a few questions to motivate him to become spirited through talking, listened to his stories (which the others already knew), did not point out his repetitions, and complimented him as popular and being compassionate, regardless of their true opinions. The emotional labour induced zealous listening. As a result, we were able to evoke happiness and satisfaction in Tachibana-san's mind, which made the hostesses in turn feel confident in the role of professional hostesses. The hostesses enhanced the hostess-customer relationship.

Hostesses allow customers to rely on their *kizukai*. Tachibana-san relied on the hostesses' *kizukai*, such as entertaining him, strengthening his self-esteem and indulging him. In return, he took care of hostesses in different ways, such as clearing their quotas or ordering expensive bottles. A scholar in pedagogy Inagaki Kyoko (2015:8–9) explains that apprentices of *rakugo* offer *kizukai* and masters in turn do '*omonbakaru*', which means becoming attentive in order to recognise *kizukai* offered by apprentices and to take care of them. The difference between hostesses and *rakugo* apprentices is that the former actively offer *kizukai* in order for customers to rely on them as much as possible, while the latter do not aim for this. The more customers rely on hostesses'

kizukai, the more likely they will be to nurture intimacy and the more likely it will be that customers will come back to a club.

On the other hand, a consequence of of *kizukai*, hostesses sometimes perform reliance on customers. For example, during a conversation between Katakura-san, a man in his 70s, and Minako, a former hostess in her 40s, I asked why he thought Minako was such a promising hostess. He answered, 'Because she is very *omizu ppoi*' (a person who seems to fit a night-time job). Minako smiled and said, '*Ehe*?' in a sweet voice, inclining her head to Katakura-san. She indicated her affection towards him by this coquettish behaviour, which aroused a protective instinct in him, and thus elicited an *amae* relationship. Katakura-san smiled and replied, 'See, like this'. Her act is called *kobiru* (a verb form of flattery), *burikko* (acting sweet) or *nyan nyan suru* (an onomatopoeic word relating to a cat mewing, also meaning acting sweet), and connotes femininity, subordination and powerlessness. In return for her feminine act, Katakura-san took care of her. Although Minako was the one who seemed to rely on Katakura-san, her *kobiru* behaviour was a result of her emotional labour, because, through her unceasing mind-reading, she understood Katakura-san's desire to take care of someone or to be appreciated. As a result, Minako successfully generated an *amae* relationship, and who was relying on whom became unclear; therefore *kizukai* emotional labour carefully disguised an intention to win the customer's favour.

When comparing AL volunteers and hostesses, there are two common results of their emotional labour: firstly, both gain confidence; and secondly, both win their clients'/customers' favour and trust, and strengthen intimacy. AL volunteers and hostesses often intensify their identity as good listeners or professional communicators through their skilful emotional labour. This is because, firstly, making others happy is their ultimate purpose; and secondly, because emotional labour always consists of autonomous decisions, thus when they succeed, they feel themselves to be accomplished. For example, I enjoyed performing as a cheerful hostess and when the customer became happy, I felt happy too, even if I was exhausted from a lack of sleep and too much alcohol. I also felt I succeeded because of my own decisions. In other occupations, people also build confidence or improve their self-concepts through emotional labour (Bolton and Boyd 2003; Cleark 2014; Tolich 1993). For example, supermarket clerks in the US provide emotional labour, such as offering cheerful interactions or caring behaviour at checkout stands. They are motivated by their own desire to cultivate wholehearted customer-clerk relationships and simply to have fun, although they are obliged to engage in emotional labour by the shop management.

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Therefore, for them, their customers are a source of both stress and satisfaction, and their emotional work is regulated and autonomous (Tolich 1993). Similarly, AL volunteers' *yorisoi* and hostesses' *kizukai* are their own discrete and aesthetic choices, which eventually build their confidence, although their emotional labour sometimes brings stress and anxiety.

The second point of the common result of emotional labour is winning favour and strengthening intimacy. AL volunteers gain their clients' favour and earn their trust by doing *yorisou* and making their clients happy or less lonely. Hostesses earn their customers trust and win their favour through carrying out *kizukai*, entertaining them and making them satisfied. This pattern of communication nurtures intimacy between volunteers and their clients as well as hostesses and their clients in time. Their intimate and trusting relationships become beneficial for the volunteers and the hostesses. The volunteers can keep gaining respect and appreciation from their clients. The hostesses can become more likely to get money, support, networks and protection from their clients. Therefore, having intimate relationships and becoming a likeable listener secure their benefits.

Winning someone's favour and trust is very important for achieving success in business and social life in general in Japan. One can find related phrases in self-help guides on listening too, such as 'a good listener is being liked' (Innovation club 2009:25; Ito 2003:5), 'the ability of listening is the ability to be loved' (Shibuya 2010:4), and listening is 'a skill to make others seek to get closer to you' (Nemoto 2015:13). The authors refer to the benefit of learning listening skills as winning someone's favour and enhancing closeness. None of the authors sees listening as emotional labour; however, what they implicitly recommend is a type of listening that is underpinned by skilful emotional labour.

Overall, in this section, I have described types of emotional labour: *yorisou* in AL volunteering and *kizukai* in hostess clubs. Through *yorisou*, AL volunteers read clients' feelings, become empathetic, put themselves in others' shoes and control emotional attachment and detachment. Based on this emotional labour, the volunteers use therapeutic listening, deep-acting listening and surface-acting listening. Although *yorisou* implies a kind-hearted image or egalitarianism, *yorisou* is the emotional labour of those in power as it is associated with the idea of helping, so *yorisou* leads to supportive listening. By *kizukai*, hostesses offer endless mind-reading, become thoughtful about others, predict a need, and satisfy that need ahead of receiving a request, which could be physical, material or emotional. Their emotional labour brings about

zealous listening and influences their listening, such as the types of question they ask, the points they seek to praise or what to avoid commenting on. In both cases, through providing skilful emotional labour, they firstly improve their self-concepts as competent listeners or communicators due to the autonomous aspect of emotional labour; and, secondly, they win their clients'/customers' favour and trust, and strengthen their intimacy, which eventually becomes benefits for these listeners. This is the benefit that authors of self-help guides on listening explicitly/implicitly advertise. The tacit message of the guides is that the ideal listener is one who can offer competent emotional labour.

5.2 Surviving in abusive situations: avoiding the deterioration of intimacy

5.2.1 Dealing with abusive customers in a hostess club

On occasion, customers verbally abuse hostesses, for example by making sarcastic remarks to them, or humiliating or scolding them. Even then, hostesses attempt to please customers or make them satisfied. When I once faced an abusive situation in Club Mizuno, I failed in providing the appropriate emotional labour, so I was unsuccessful, both as a competent hostess and listener. However, from this experience, I learnt how experienced hostesses offer emotional labour in such occasions, and how to behave as a listener. I first analyse this episode and the advice I got from an experienced hostess, and I then recount two other episodes where hostesses were forced to provide emotional labour by staying in the role of a passive listener.

One day in February, around 11.00 pm, my last customer was Koyama-san, a man in his 50s. Before joining the table Tani told me that Koyama-san had graduated from Keio University and played rugby. However, this information was wrong, and later caused me trouble. I was already slightly drunk. As usual, I introduced myself and made a drink for him. He was a short man, wearing casual clothes. He frowned and did not smile. I asked, 'Do you play rugby?' He answered me, 'Ha? Why...? We're at crossed purposes...' (*hanashi ga awanai na*). From the beginning, the conversation was awkward. I realised that the information given to me by Tani was wrong, as he was also drunk. In addition to this, Tani introduced me to him as a student at the University of Cambridge, which made him meaner to me. Later, Tani told me that he did not realise it at the time but probably Koyama-san must have disliked university-educated hostesses. Koyama-san said to

me, 'Why are you here?' in a mean tone. I answered, 'I want to learn hostesses' communication, so...'. Koyama-san did not reply, but sat there unpleasantly and looked elsewhere. He said he wanted to move table, so we transferred from the seat close to the entrance to the far side. (He might have been offended to be seated at the table near the entrance.) After a few moments, he asked me, 'Do you know how to say '*koketsu ni irazun ba koji o ezu*' (a Japanese proverb, meaning no pain no gain) in English?' and I said, 'Um...' while thinking about how to translate the proverb into English. 'You don't know? Are you really a student at the University of Cambridge?' Komiya-san asked rudely. I was quite shocked by his attitude and words; therefore, I drank a lot to reduce my nervousness and stress. I had already drunk quite a lot with several customers that day, and therefore I became even more intoxicated. I tried to focus on the conversation, but was preoccupied with considering why he had become so mean to me and what he really wanted.

Rina, the youngest hostess, still in her 20s, joined our table. He asked Rina some questions. They talked in a friendly way for a few minutes and the topic turned to someone's death. I was not listening as I was shocked and drunk, and kept smiling, which displeased Koyama-san again. He harshly continued, 'You think you'll be fine if you keep smiling, right? Ha?' I kept smiling without saying a word. He also asked us Sayuri-mama's name and he said 'Saori, isn't it?' The name he said was slightly different, but I mistakenly said yes. Then, Rina said, 'No, it is Sayuri'. He angrily said, 'You do not even remember the Mama's name?' He was looking for a chance to degrade me at every moment, therefore I kept quiet, smiled and waited for the conversation to end. I was completely submissive. Usually, in this kind of case, which means a customer clearly dislikes a hostess, a concierge exchanges the hostess but for some reason, I was not moved to another table. Probably, other hostesses were about to go home at this time, so I was forced to stay there.

Due to having drunk too much, I cannot remember what we conversed about and how I behaved after this moment. I only remember that I vomited in the street on the way home. This was the only night I got completely drunk and had a black-out. As was predictable, Koyama-san never came back to Club Mizuno while I was working there.

Firstly, I was mentally hurt. I did not understand why he disliked me. I was confused and felt belittled and disgraced. Secondly, I was physically hurt, experiencing a huge hungover and a black-out. I was supposed to work the next day but had to cancel. I messaged Minako, the former hostess who found me the job. She advised me as follows:

Translation: (Listening) in one ear and out the other. Not as active/deep listening (keichō), but as nought/zero. You should not face someone's distorted heart directly. See it in a way like, 'He is pitiful. Yes, yes, OK, it's all my fault, but I don't agree with you.' I always try to think, 'He is pitiful, (but) I want him to go home with a smile on his face.' If possible, try to ask about his background wisely, such as the environment he grew up in, his family structure, his position in his company or in his family. The information should make sense. There are always meanings there. He might want to be associated with someone because no one usually communicates with him. He might want to vent his anger on someone because he does not have anyone who receives his anger. He might want to keep his dignity by hurting someone because he does not have confidence. Men's fear stemming from finding someone potentially superior to them will turn into aggression. It is usual (for a hostess) to be hit by customers' emotions. (10. 02. 2018)

Minako's advice really cheered me up and taught me a lot about what kinds of emotional labour hostesses should perform and what types of listening they need to offer in such a situation.

First, she suggests letting things go in one ear and out the other, and not to do active/deep listening, which means not taking words personally. She also says that hostesses should become nought/zero: in other words, withdrawing from emotional pain. In the night, I tried to withdraw from emotional pain instinctively by drinking more alcohol, but this specific method was wrong. Too much drinking reduced my focus and made me take things personally.

To withdraw from emotional pain, Minako suggests a certain way of listening. Her listening is characterised by two aspects: first, her listening consists of asking questions inquisitively; second, her listening allows listeners to keep both their own true emotions that differ from the surface expressions as well as emotions that are altered to align with the surface acting. I name Minako's listening 'listening obliquely'.

Listening obliquely could be considered as being somewhere between deep and surface-acting listening. Minako says, '…it's all my fault, although I don't agree with you', and '(but) I want him to go home with a smile on his face', which indicates two different emotions: first, disagreeing and feeling annoyed; and second, accepting what is said and compassion towards customers, which is situationally and occupationally required. By surface-acting listening, listeners keep the former emotions, while by deep-acting listening, listeners generate only the latter type of emotions. However, with listening obliquely, listeners can keep in touch with both feelings.

The process to generate compassion also differs between deep-acting listening and listening obliquely. The former requires listeners to imagine or assume acceptable reasons why their customers behave rudely and to alter their true emotions to situationally and occupationally required ones, while the latter allows listeners to ask questions inquisitively and rationally to construct acceptable images of their customers. For example, when flight attendants in Hochschild's research (2012:25, 55, 110–111) feel frustrated or angry with customers, they imagine something traumatic has happened in the passengers' life, or they consider that they are just like children who need attention. These imaginative strategies help them in altering their frustrations to compassion and in displaying expected behaviour, and enables the flight attendants to keep offering emotional labour. Three hostesses similarly explained to me that they also often imagine that customers are babies who need attention, which enables them to generate compassion. By listening obliquely, rather than imagining or assuming, listeners ask many questions inquisitively to customers and (re)construct perspectives of the customers, which is the more logical and time-consuming process than the former, deep-acting listening, approach.

Listening obliquely partially resembles AL. Minako says it is a way of suppressing one's emotions by saying to oneself '…it's all my fault, but I don't agree with you'. This generates a situation which a listener accepts what is said, while putting their own emotions to one side rather than simply dismissing them. This accepting process resembles a type of listening called unconditional acceptance (*mujōken no juyō*), and putting one's emotion aside is a listening skill called empathetic understanding (*kyōkan teki rikai*) in AL theory. Therefore, although Minako says that hostesses should not do active/deep listening (*keichō*), the way of listening she recommends is a part of AL.

However, listening obliquely and AL differ in three respects. First, as Minako recommends, asking questions inquisitively is the core of this listening, while it is forbidden in AL. Second, listeners performing obliquely are probably not accepting speakers unconditionally because they seek to create an acceptable image of the other party, while AL listeners are required to give unconditional acceptance. Third, in reality AL volunteers often experience a sense of discarding – or even killing – their own emotions rather than just putting them aside, while this does not happen in listening obliquely. For example, Akiyama, a female volunteer in her late 70s, with nine years' experience of AL, once said: 'While you are doing AL, you kill your own self (*jibun o korosu*)...' Many volunteers experience suppressing or discarding their own emotions, which is deep-acting

listening. On the other hand, Minako's listening does not mean listeners discard emotions, therefore listening obliquely includes deep-acting listening as well as surface-acting listening.

In my case, I suppressed my emotions in order not to express my sadness and anger (deep-acting). I was not able to accept Koyama-san's mean behaviour as my fault and to put my feeling aside. I was confused and simply submissive. I simply saw him as a mean person. I failed to become inquisitive and to create an acceptable, comfortable version of Koyama-san in my mind (listening obliquely), or to imagine that Koyama-san wanted to be associated with someone because no one usually communicated with him (surface-acting).

As a result of listening obliquely, Minako aims to produce a smile in customers. She comments, '…I want him to go home with a smile on his face', which shows her deeply engrained empathetic values and therefore indicates her deep-acting as a hostess. In reality, at the end of this abusive situation, I ended up strengthening the subordinate-superior relationship with the customer as I was only able to display my submission.

The following two episodes also illustrate reinforced subordinate-superior relationships between hostesses and customers as a result of emotional labour in offensive situations. The hostesses in both these cases were forced to stay in the role of passive listeners.

One day in February, Ogasawara-san, the seventy-something former concierge/owner of several clubs who had introduced me to Club Mizuno, came there with Risa, a new potential hostess in her late 20s. She was an elementary school teacher and had somehow met Ogasawara-san (she did not tell me the details) and become attracted to hostess work. For Risa, this visit was an interview for a job at Club Mizuno. I was asked to sit at his table. Ogasawara-san asked me how my work was going, and I thanked him for giving me a chance to work as a hostess. Tani sat at the table and greeted Ogasawara-san. After a casual chat, a young and *seiso na* (neat and with pure looks) hostess from a famous club arrived because Ogasawara-san had invited her to come and drink with him. Tani praised her for being so beautiful. Risa became a bit inquisitive, asking many questions of Ogasawara-san. He got annoyed with her, and irritably said, 'If you are good at drinking, drink a shot of tequila now!' She dutifully drank two shots of tequila, but did not realise that the hidden message behind this was 'shut up!', so she continued asking questions and commenting on the conversation. Ogasawara-san's anger peaked and he scolded Risa for being talkative and self-assertive, saying, 'Shut up! Just drink tequila. Don't be so self-assertive. Listen!

You are really annoying!' The hostess from the other club tried to protect her by saying something to Ogasawara-san, but he angrily replied, 'If you say anthing else, I'll scold you too!' His anger continued until Risa cried. He clearly forced her to perform the role of the reserved, passive listener.

Risa was forced by Ogasawara-san to offer emotional labour. She tolerated his harsh comments by suppressing her dejection and created submission in her mind by accepting his order to drink alcohol. This emotional management affected her way of listening: she became a passive and quiet listener. Her emotional labour and listening behaviour satisfied Ogasawara-san because he was able to prove his authority and to dominate the conversation. In the end, they intensified their subordinate-superior relationship.

Risa started working in Club Mizuno a few weeks later. I noticed a change that happened to her. She performed as a reserved hostess, possibly even too passive from my perspective. I knew she could be more cheerful and proactive but she listened to customers quietly while displaying her genuine respect towards them. It seemed that she believed that all customers were worth respecting.

On another day, in March, Hanna, a middle-ranking hostess in her late 30s, encountered a similar situation. Six hostesses were waiting for the first customer to arrive. Matsumoto-san, a man in his 80s or 90s with slight dementia, entered the club. Yamamoto chose two hostesses, Hanna and Reina. However, after five minutes, Hanna came back to the standing-waiting lobby and told Yamamoto, 'He said to me, "I do not want a woman who chit-chats like you, change, change!" He also said, "Women should just listen to others quietly"'. Yamamoto tried to support her, saying 'He has dementia and sometimes becomes a bit difficult...' I know that Hanna is not talkative. She is cheerful and speaks with a clear voice. I imagined that she probably merely tried to fill a silence. Hanna looked shocked and upset. Other hostesses were also agitated, except Mika, an experienced, high-ranking hostess in her late 30s. She laughed and said, 'You should go to his table 30 minutes later and say, "Nice to meet you, it is a pleasure to meet you". We are professionals! A thing like this doesn't throw us, does it!' Hanna laughed and was able to move on quickly. Mika offered a chance for Hanna to properly activate surface-acting as a professional hostess through making fun of the customer.

Like Risa, Hanna endured criticism and rejection from the customer and showed acceptance of his orders by leaving the table, so she tolerated feeling upset and generated submission in her mind. She did not have time to act as a listener as she left the table, but she would have been able

to make him satisfied if she had performed as a passive and quiet listener. Although she left the table, she offered emotional labour, and, as a result, she stayed in a subordinate position and let the customer stay in a superior position.

The difference between Risa and Hanna is that the former eventually embodied deep-acting, which later influenced her passive listening style, while the latter learnt surface-acting, which prevented her from becoming a quiet listener later at others' tables. Although Hanna was once forced by a customer to drink a glass of champagne and to eat a slice of raw ham placed on top of it, she cheerfully drank and ate it and kept conversing with him happily. She properly offered surface-acting.

Surface-acting and surface-acting listening become a form of silent resistance. Hostesses do not show their anger or disappointment in front of customers, while, in their minds, they harbour disrespect. For example, one customer told me, 'You (your appearance) are plain!' (*jimi dana!*). I was not able to come up with a humorous response, so I just cheerfully said, 'Ehhhhh!' and smiled. I was irritated and thought, 'Your appearance is much worse!' but resisted, by using surface-acting. On another day, after I had explained my research, one customer commented, 'Do more useful research which can actually contribute to society!' I laughed and resisted, while thinking, 'How can you ignorantly judge the value of someone's passion?' Tsukasa, a high-ranking hostess in her late 30s, was told by her customer, 'A pink dress? It is hard (to look) at a middle-aged lady who is close to 40 in a pink dress!' Tsukasa laughed this off. Aoi, a middle-ranking hostess in her late 30s, told me that once she was told, 'You! You've had plastic surgery on your nose, haven't you? Oh, maybe not, because if so, you should be more beautiful!' She smiled wholeheartedly and replied to him, laughing, 'I didn't!', but she was furious. Hostesses can engage in surface-acting and surface-acting listening because they presuppose that tolerating these customers is a part of their profession, and they know that the ability to tolerate helps them to avoid offending customers, which prevents them experiencing further emotional damage.

5.2.2 Dealing with difficult clients in AL volunteering

AL volunteers also perform emotional labour in difficult encounters. Like the hostesses, in the following case a volunteer rationally and slowly constructed a likeable image of her client, which enabled her to continue her emotional work.

At the beginning of March, I joined Kondō, a female member (68 years old) of Fukurō with eight years of experience. She used to work as a full-time employee in a patent office in Marunouchi, Tokyo, while raising two children. After retiring, she joined several volunteering groups. We visited Kaneko-san, a 90-year-old female resident in a small nursing home. She used to work somewhere in Tokyo, but the details were unknown. Kondō had visited Kaneko-san with another female member three times previously.

Arriving at 13.30, we were asked to wash our hands and to gargle with mouth-rinse in the bathroom in order not to bring in germs. We went up to the second floor where Kaneko-san's room was located. Knocking on the door, Kondō said: 'I came again to listen to you. May we please enter?' Kaneko-san remembered her, replying, 'Oh, it's you. Yes. Come in. Please tell me about yourself this time.' Like Hasegawa-san (see Chapter 4.3), she also asked the volunteer to speak. Kaneko-san's room was a small bedroom with a separated bathroom, including two chests of drawers, a TV, plastic bags and newspapers on the bed, and some craftwork displayed on the walls. The room was dark due to the bad weather and the lights being off. We entered, but then Kaneko-san suddenly shouted, 'No! don't stand there!', pointing out a dirty part on the floor. She said that an 'unknown dirty man' (*shiranai iyarashii otoko*) came to her room and left oil on the floor. I was shocked by Kaneko-san's tone of voice, and felt worried about how to talk with her, but Kondō calmly said, 'I see, we will avoid it'. We duly avoided the spot and moved two chairs to beside the bed where Kaneko-san was sitting. She started talking about the dirty mark again and also complained that some random people and members of staff had stolen her money and clothes. Kondō empathetically responded, 'It's must be troublesome for you'.

Kaneko-san talked about her disciplinarian mother and her nasty husband. Kondō commented, 'Ah, this is why Kaneko-san is strong'. Kaneko-san replied 'Yes!', with anger in her voice. She also complained about her friend who brought her only a single apple. She confessed, 'It is a secret, but I will go home soon'. Sometimes Kaneko-san jokingly hit Kondō's arm with her right hand.

Kondō compassionately listened to Kaneko-san, frequently nodding her head and making *aizuchi* (interjections) such as 'Uh...' and 'Ah, yes' (*sōdesuka*). She asked a lot of questions to keep up the conversation. Her attitude was one of therapeutic listening at this point.

Kaneko-san suddenly asked Kondō a question: 'What is life, for you?' (*jinsei o dō omou no?*). I was surprised by this highly abstract question and was nervous about how to answer. Kondō said, 'Um...I am wondering...' (*um...dō desuka ne...*), at which point Kaneko-san started lecturing her,

'You're not saying anything clearly. Why don't you say anything?' Kondō responded to her, 'Maybe I want to show myself in a good light to others. I am learning from many people.' To what extent volunteers should speak up is a typical dilemma, although this does not mean that volunteers should not speak at all. Kondō continued to ask questions as if she was learning from Kaneko-san's life story. This was a way to let Kaneko-san speak more and to restrict herself from speaking. Kaneko-san talked about how and why she did not care about being disliked by others. She said to Kondō, 'You do not have your own self' (*anta wa jibun ga nai ne*). She did not ask any questions of me directly but twice requested that I agree with her opinion. I was not able to ask any questions of Kaneko-san due to my nervousness in the face of her aggressiveness. Towards the end of the session, Kaneko-san started to smile a little, but the hour was up. We thanked her and left.

Overall, Kondō successfully performed emotional labour when Kaneko-san suddenly shouted at her, behaved in authoritarian ways and articulated criticism towards her. In her mind, she suppressed feeling accused by the bad-tempered Kaneko-san and evoked benevolence and respect. Her emotional labour affected her listening, therefore she used both therapeutic and zealous listening. She displayed both caring attitudes with empathetic responses and an intention to learn from Kaneko-san's life philosophy while carefully reading her facial expressions and emotions.

Consequently, their relationship became not a typical helper-helpee one, but a junior-senior or a learner-teacher relationship. The previous examples, such as Morinaga-san (Chapter 4.2), Hasegawa-san (Chapter 4.3), Komine-san (Chapter 4.3) and Eguchi-san (Chapter 5.1.1), tended to either constantly reconstruct their forms of relationships or hold multi-layered relationships. However, it seemed that Kaneko-san and Kondō more clearly reversed the typical relationship.

The reasons for this reversed phenomenon can be caused by both sides' preferred communication styles and motivations for their conversation. Kaneko-san behaved like a senior. This might have been because she did not understand Kondō as a volunteer due to her dementia, like Komine-san. Moreover, her authoritarian attitude might have been caused by her feeling ashamed (*nasakenai*) or her dignity as a senior because she was a strong-willed person (I do not know why she accepted an AL volunteer in the first place). From Kondō's side, she contributed to this reversed relationship by being submissive and modest, which she said, is her preferred communication style. She also mentioned that her motivations for AL are mainly to enjoy time with, and learn from, elderly people, rather than helping them. Furthermore, Kondō's deft

emotional labour helped in creating this reversed relationship. I will explain more about Kondō's side of the interaction and emotional labour in the following paragraphs.

Kondō's preferred communication style was being submissive and modest. In the interview, she said, 'Since I was little, I tended to accept whatever people said. So Kaneko-san's words did not hurt me so much,…' and 'I do not like standing above others. I am comfortable in a submissive position.' (*hito no ue ni tatsu no wa suki ja nai no, shita de ii no.*) She recognised that she tended to behave submissively, and she preferred it. It was clear that she was fine with her client showing authoritarian attitudes.

Her motivations for AL also helped create the reversed relationship. Her main motivation was not helping elderly people, but herself. First, she did not want to become senile, so to keep being proactive, she joined several volunteering groups. Moreover, she continues AL volunteering because she enjoyed listening to elderly people's life stories which always contain something moving, or historical elements which are new to her. She did not articulate the typical reasons volunteers give for their work, such as 'I want to contribute to society' or 'I want to become useful for people'. She even said, 'I do not feel that I am doing volunteering and have not thought about becoming a good listener' (*borantia o shiteiru to omotte naishi, kikijōzu ni narō toka mo omowanai*), although she told me that her dream job was a nurse or caregiver. Therefore, from her perspective, her relationship with Kaneko-san was not a helper-helpee one in the first place. Her motivations disclose that she did not intend to help clients, but rather to enjoy herself or her time with clients.

Furthermore, her deft emotional labour, constructing a likeable image of the client, allowed herself to keep offering such labour as well as allowing Kaneko-san to stay in a senior, authoritarian position. In the interview, Kondō said how she felt about conversations with Kaneko-san: 'The first time I communicated with her, I was surprised by her words and attitude but I got used to it over time. Since I was little, I tended to accept whatever was said to me. So Kaneko-san's words did not hurt me so much, although other volunteers seemed to feel that they did not get along with her and hesitated to communicate with her (*nigate*).' She continued, 'As I have spent more time with Kaneko-san, I have come to understand that her harsh attitudes come from her experiences in surviving a very difficult era and an unkind family. I have started feeling I want to learn from her.' She admitted that she was surprised by Kaneko-san's interaction in the beginning, but over time, she started to construct a different insight regarding Kaneko-san as a

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person who had to overcome many hardships. This new understanding evoked benevolence and respect in Kondō's mind and led her to engage in both therapeutic and zealous listening. Although she had an investigative interaction and rationally created her opinion towards Kaneko-san, this cannot be termed 'listening obliquely', because she no longer maintained her surprise or confusion about Kaneko-san. This is deep-acting listening.

Kondō's submissive communication style, her motivations to enjoy and learn from elderly people, and her deft emotional labour seem to work together to create the overall form of the relationship.

In terms of emotional labour, Kondō confessed another point: she often felt pressure to entertain a client. She said: 'I feel that I am wasting my clients' time when a conversation does not *hazumu* (become lively, *moriagaru*)[xxxv]. Finding topics to talk about is hard work. I do not know what topic would upset clients, so I do not want to interrogate. I need to search for topics which make her/him excited without hurting or offending. When a conversation becomes *hazumu*, I feel I am allowed to stay there. It brings confidence.' She could not tolerate situations where a conversation does not *hazumu* and felt responsible for such a conversation as a listener. Therefore, she carefully read clients' emotions and found topics to talk about, like hostesses do. Other volunteers also say their aim is 'for clients to enjoy conversing or have a fun time', although coaches and authors of AL teach that, theoretically, the aim of AL is not to *moriageru*. For *moriageru*, the volunteer needs to imagine the client's situation and feelings, to create caring emotions and to evoke an interest in the client. Therefore, a lively conversation requires emotional labour.

When hostesses and AL volunteers have to perform emotional labour in derogatory situations, there are three things in common. Firstly, both are attempting to ameliorate the situation or not to worsen relationships with clients/customers. Therefore they are extremely afraid of offending them. Avoiding offending someone and becoming sensitive to dealing with people are common demands in contemporary Japan, even in normal situations. Sociologist Emile Durkheim (2002:29) and

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[xxxv] 'A conversation does *hazumu*' (*kaiwa ga hazumu*) is equivalent to 'a conversation does *moriagaru*'. Hazumu refers to when something elastic hits a surface and rebounds vigorously: jumping up, becoming lively, giving way to enthusiasm, making something stimulating (Digital Dai-ji-sen Japanese Dictionary Online, accessed 2 Nobember 2019). During my fieldwork, interlocutors from the older generation tended to use *hazumu* while those from the younger generation tended to say *moriagaru*.

other academics have argued that individuals and human personalities have become sacred. Psychiatrist Ōhira Ken (1995:177–178, 192) also identifies the emergence of people who are caring, who offer *kizukai*, in order not to offend anyone, and who do not speak a lot towards superiors as '"*yasashii" hitotachi*' ('kind' people). People are already sensitised to treat others like sacred figures even in non-upsetting situations, so those who are in charge of others' emotions in a gloomy or cynical atmosphere need to exercise extreme emotional management. Through this, they protect themselves from further emotional pain and from being disliked, which is the other side of the coin of winning someone's favour and trust.

Secondly, both the hostesses and the AL volunteers in abusive situations intensify hierarchy. This is because the foremost fundamental form of emotional labour that they can perform in offensive situations is to accept the other party's negative comments or feelings, and not to offend the other party while suppressing their own feelings of disgust, disrespect or pain. As a result, the other party tended to show their dominance in conversations and hostesses and volunteers were prone to displaying deference and submission.

Furthermore, even in abusive situations, they strengthen their identities as professionals to some extent by interpreting the situation as a trial in which they must prove their competency. Minako said, 'I want him to go home with a smile on his face', which indicates her professionalism. Mika cheered up Hanna, her colleague, by saying, 'We are professionals! A thing like this doesn't throw us, does it!' Kondō did not verbalise this, but in the end she became a type of caregiver, just as she had wanted.

The difference in emotional labour between AL volunteers and hostesses is that the former are more likely to strengthen their deep-acting than hostesses. For example, hostesses can express frustration and their disrespect towards customers backstage, such as drinking outside with trustworthy colleagues, whereas although AL volunteers have a backstage where they hold meetings to share their issues and experiences, they do not forget their respect towards their clients even if their clients are difficult. Researcher of health science Takei Asako (2016:50–51) discusses that recognising and accepting one's work as emotional labour helps people in the service sector to manage their emotions, however for people in social welfare services, this realisation – of using surface-acting and pretending – could generate remorse at not being genuine caregivers. Thus they attempt to eliminate their emotions. As she points out, not only society but also AL volunteers themselves seem to expect that volunteers should be sincere, empathetic and benevolent. Therefore,

they intensify deep-acting, despite the fact that they sometimes use surface-acting too. This social expectation could bring about 'compassion fatigue', meaning stress or strain caused by 'caring too much' (Yoder 2010) or caring for others with difficult issues, and having a draining emotional experience (Drummond 2012). Restricting listeners from using various forms of emotional labour, such as only embodying deep-acting listening, would prevent them from becoming good listeners.

In this section, I have discussed how emotional labour in abusive cases affects ways of listening, in order to contrast the different emotional labour and listening involved with non-abusive cases. Hostesses suppress emotions of aversion, generate submission in their minds and evoke cheerful feelings. This emotional work often enables hostesses to become passive and quiet listeners. However, some experienced hostesses skilfully perform listening obliquely, surface-acting listening or deep-acting listening. Regardless of the types of listening, they end up inducing superiority or reducing grumpiness in customers, and enhancing subordinate-superior relationships. Similarly, an AL volunteer represses her perturbation and generates compassion and respect by reconstructing her perception of her client. Therefore, her listening behaviour is a mixture of therapeutic and zealous listening. Consequently, her client feels understood and respected and they create a subordinate-superior relationship. After several meetings, she dismisses her discomfort towards the difficult client and is engaged in deep-acting. This is because they are socially expected to become warm-hearted caregivers and they themselves believe they should become benevolent.

5.3 Conclusion

In order to become an ideal listener in Japan, one has to excel in emotional labour because listening is a subset of the emotional labour required during a conversation. Hostesses and AL volunteers aim to make their customers/clients feel that they are enjoying themselves, that they are satisfied, that they are the ones dominating, that they are respected or that they feel less lonely, therefore their work calls for emotional labour. They are often responsible for taking on the role of the listener, thus their emotional labour and listening behaviour are entangled and displayed together.

Depending on the situation, they engage in different types of emotional labour, therefore their ways of listening also vary. In non-dissonant situations, AL volunteers are basically involved in emotional labour by *yorisou* and generate caring feelings in their minds, and suppress or discard boredom or tiredness. This emotional management enables them to offer therapeutic listening,

deep-acting listening or surface-acting listening. As a result, clients enjoy having a conversation and feel less lonely, and volunteers gain confidence in themselves as helpful listeners. Although *yorisou* has a kind and egalitarian image, this actually applies to those in positions of a giver, therefore listening based on *yorisou* is supportive listening. Hostesses fundamentally provide *kizukai* and awaken happiness, respect, compassion and interest in their minds and repress disinterest and fatigue. This emotional management induces zealous listening (and therapeutic listening if it required by customers) and affects the types of question they pose, the points they praise or the things they avoid commenting about.

In both cases, AL volunteers and hostesses firstly build confidence as helpful listeners or professional communicators due to the autonomous element of emotional labour. Moreover, they win their clients'/customers' favour and trust, and strengthen their intimacy over time, which brings benefits to listeners. This is why authors of self-help literature on listening explicitly/implicitly refer to listening as a skill that enables a person to be loved by others and recommend becoming a good listener. The hidden message of this statement is that the ideal listener is one who can master emotional labour.

Emotional labour becomes harder when customers or clients are abusive, spiteful or unkind. However, even in such a situation, hostesses and AL volunteers attempt not to reduce their intimacy with their customers/clients. Consequently, they reinforce their hierarchical relationships. Hostesses engage in suppressing disgust and generating deference in their minds while still evoking happy emotions as usual. Some hostesses end up becoming passive and quiet listeners while other experienced hostesses provide skilful listening, such as listening obliquely, surface-acting listening or deep-acting listening. As a result, they make customers feel superior or less grumpy, and they tend to generate subordinate-superior relationships.

Similarly, AL volunteers sometimes experience difficult clients who criticise them or say hurtful things to them. In the case I introduced, the AL volunteer altered her uneasiness towards her difficult client to compassion and respect by reconstructing her understanding of the client, which is a form of deep-acting. Her deft emotional labour led her to using both therapeutic and zealous listening. In the end, her client felt understood and respected and they created a learner-teacher or subordinate-superior relationship. Compared to hostesses, volunteers are more likely to engage in deep-acting as they are socially expected to become truly benevolent caregivers.

However, this might limit them with regard to embodying a variety of listening forms and becoming a good listener.

Chapter 6. *Nagara* listening that every listener does

How do non-occupational listeners listen in a conversation? What is a good listener among family or friends? I carried out fieldwork in a cafe, restaurant, bars and university lectures as well as analysing TV dramas. I found a type of listening that every listener acquires; that is being involved in several other actions/acts while listening in interactive situations. This behaviour seems to help in making a smooth interaction although this is subtle and difficult to distinguish if it is conscious or unconscious. I name this '*nagara* listening'.

In this chapter, I will examine *nagara* listening. Firstly, I will define what this listening is and explain the limitation of existing theories to frame this concept, then move to discussing the reason that every listener engages in such listening. Finally, I will scrutinise the factors that could influence the degree and types of *nagara* listening.

6.1 Unconsciously embodied listening

A typical example of *nagara* listening appears one sunny day at a Starbucks store in Tokyo. Two women in their fifties meet for a late-morning coffee and sit next to each other on a sofa. One of them touches her smartphone in front of her on the table with her left hand, then combs her hair with that hand, and eats a slice of chocolate cake with her right hand, while she listens to her friend talking. She turns to her friend and then looks at the chocolate cake again. She crosses both hands on her lap, looks at her friend's smartphone, nods and mumbles '*hō*', while her friend explains an app. She drinks her coffee and then rests her left elbow on her bag, which is placed next to her on the sofa, cups her chin in the palm of her hand, touches her hair and nods while facing her friend again (22/01/2016).

In this example, at the same time as listening to each other, responding verbally, nodding and thinking about the topic, these two friends also drank coffee, ate cake, checked their smartphones, touched their hair, and changed their posture. In Japanese, actions/acts that take place at the same time can be expressed in the form of 'stem of verb + *nagara*' to describe 'while doing' followed by the verb describing the main activity in its usual grammatical form. For example, *tabenagara terebi o miru* (watching TV while eating), where *tabe* is the stem of the verb *taberu* 'to eat'; *kōhi o nominagara hanashi o kiku* (listening while drinking coffee), where *nomi* is the stem of the verb

nomu 'to drink'. I name this type of listening '*nagara* listening'. *Nagara* activity is one of the main characteristics of listeners' behaviour and its tacit rule.

Nagara listening, however, does not completely equate with listening as multitasking. According to the dictionary definition, 'multitasking' refers to 'dealing with more than one task at the same time' (*Oxford Dictionary of English* 3rd edition 2010), where 'task' means 'a piece of work to be done or undertaken' (*Oxford Dictionary of English* 3rd edition 2010). Thus, multitasking is limited to tasks, jobs, duties or actions and does not include the intentional and unintentional momentary body movements, in other words, acts or gesture, such as eye contact and turning one's face, that are so much part of listening behaviour. The advantage of the term *nagara* listening is that it encompasses both of these aspects (see more discussion about multitasking and listening later).

To refine the concept of *nagara* listening, I investigate this concept based on Goffman's involvement theory and Hall's polychronic-culture theory and conclude that nagara listening consists of both hierarchical and non-hierarchical actions and acts.

First, it is helpful to consider Goffman's concept of 'main and side involvements' and 'dominant and subordinate involvements'.

Men and animals have a capacity to divide their attention into main and side involvements. A main involvement is one that absorbs the major part of an individual's attention and interest, visibly forming the principal current determinant of his actions. A side activity is an activity that an individual can carry on in an abstracted fashion without threatening or confusing simultaneous maintenance of a main involvement. Whether momentary or continuous, simple or complicated, these side activities appear to constitute a kind of fugue like dissociation of minor muscular activity from the main line of an individual's action. Humming while working and knitting while listening are examples. (Goffman 1963:43)

Goffman continues his argument by drawing a related but separate distinction between dominant (or dominating) and subordinate involvements.

A dominating involvement is one whose claims upon an individual the social occasion obliges him to be ready to recognize; a subordinate involvement is one he is allowed to sustain only to the

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degree, and during the time, that his attention is patently not required by the involvement that dominates him. Subordinate involvements are sustained in a muted, modulated, and intermittent fashion, expressing in their style a continuous regard and deference for the official, dominating activity at hand. Thus, while waiting to see an official, an individual may converse with a friend, read a magazine, or doodle with a pencil, sustaining these engrossing claims on attention only until his turn is called, when he is obliged to put aside his time-passing activity even though it is unfinished. (Goffman 1963:44)

In short, a main involvement is the focus of a person's attention, and a side involvement is an activity that can be conducted in a casual manner without disturbing the main activity, such as 'humming while working and knitting while listening' (Goffman 1963:43). By contrast, a dominant involvement is determined by the social situation with the social roles; it is typically, but not necessarily, a main involvement. This is an involvement that the social occasion required the person to be ready to recognise. On the other hand, a subordinate involvement is an activity in which people can be engaged when their attention is not required by the dominant involvement. For example, 'while waiting to see an official, an individual may converse with a friend, read a magazine, or doodle with a pencil, sustaining these engrossing claims on attention only until his turn is called' (Goffman 1963:44). Waiting to see an official is a dominant involvement and the other behaviour is subordinate involvements.

In the previous example of two women in a Starbucks coffee shop in Tokyo, one listens to her friend, turns her face towards her, looks at her friend's smartphone, nods and says '*hō*'. In this situation, listening to her friend explaining an app on her smartphone is the main focus of the woman's attention, so these activities are the main involvement. Similarly, the social situation requires her to show her attention and response as a friend, so that they can also be thought of as dominant involvements. While maintaining her focus on listening to her friend, the woman also drinks coffee, touches her smartphone, combs her hair, eats chocolate cake, crosses both hands on her lap and cups her chin in the palm of her hand as side involvements. In this way, Goffman's framework helps us to clarify different types of listening behaviour and delineate how listeners skilfully juggle their various involvements.

Goffman's categorisation can be also applied to students in a lecture room. While listening to a lecture, students often drink water from a bottle, use a smartphone and sometimes even doze. If a student concentrates on listening to the lecture, then listening is a main involvement and any other activities are side involvements. Students are expected to pay attention to the lecture and therefore listening is the dominant involvement. If a student is involved in net-surfing during a lecture, this behaviour categorised as a subordinate involvement, because this student is paying 'at least a surface respect' (Goffman 1963:45) to the dominant involvement by sitting in the lecture room. Similarly, sociologist Brigitte Steger (2003) argues that dozing during a lecture is regarded as an acceptable subordinate involvement in Japan, because the required attention and deference is sufficiently demonstrated by one's attendance in the lecture hall. Goffman's involvement theory is beneficial to analyse the components of *nagara* listening behaviour.

However, his theory cannot decipher non-hierarchical involvements. By describing involvements in a hierarchical order, listeners are regarded as always prioritizing one behaviour over others. However, in my ethnographic observations, I found that listeners sometimes perform several actions/acts without any obvious prioritization and that listeners may also be engaged in involvements which can be viewed as main and dominant involvements from one perspective but as side involvements from another.

For example, my fieldwork notes from visiting Keio University describe seven people – four female students, two male students and one professor – in a seminar room. The room is approximately 30 square meters in size and can accommodate a maximum of 40 people. A strict hierarchy exists between the professor and the students. During the seminar, a female student nods and says, '*un un*' in a small voice, replies to the professor '*hai'* (yes), takes notes, leafs through a book and uses a smartphone to check a German word in an online dictionary. Such behaviour is typical of all the students in this seminar. Additionally, all four of the female students smile or laugh when the professor smiles or laughs (14/01/2016).

In this case, listening is the main involvement as this is the purpose of the seminar; it is also the dominant involvement as this is what is expected of students in this type of focused learning situation. However, it is possible to regard other activities as main and dominant involvements too. If prioritising listening to the professor, looking at an online dictionary to check the meaning of a German word would be considered a side involvement. However, the student understands the necessity of looking up the word and hence this activity could be understood as both a main and

dominant involvement. Smiling and laughing can also be seen as main/dominant as well as side/subordinate activities in a similar logic; they can be an obligation of the seminar to express their attendance while they are not related to the subject of the seminar. In such a case, the concept of *nagara* listening (and also listening as multitasking) transcends the limitations of Goffman's categorization and provides a means of approaching both hierarchical and non-hierarchical involvements.

Similarly, in the TV drama 'Around 40: Women with many orders' (TBS 2008), a 40-year-old female doctor, Satoko, works at a hospital. In one of the episodes, Satoko's younger friend, Nao, visits her during working hours and they talk in the hospital office sitting next to each other on a sofa in front of a low table (8:50–9:25, episode 1). While Nao convinces Satoko to wear a black dress at an alumni party, Satoko listens to her but continues working and tidying medical related papers on the table.

It is not clear what the main or dominant involvement in this situation is for Satoko. In her role as a doctor, working and tidying up could be regarded as the main and dominant involvement and listening to Nao as a side and subordinate involvement, because their meeting takes place at a hospital during working hours. However, in her role as a friend, listening to Nao could be seen as the main and dominant involvement with working and tidying up as a side and subordinate involvement. This reflects the non-hierarchical nature of these involvements in this particular situation.

Nagara listening can also be analysed from the perspective of 'polychronic culture,' a term which was first coined by Edward Hall based on his observation of distinct differences between multitasking and non-multitasking cultures. Hall's suggestion (1983:45–54) that there are 'polychronic cultures' and 'monochronic cultures' was initially presented as a means to understand the different usage of time in different cultures. People in polychronic cultures, such as Latin America, and the Arab and Asian worlds, typically carry out 'many things at a time': they often make several appointments simultaneously, thus need flexible schedules; they prefer the company of others so, even at home, interact with many people at the same time and maintain close relationships. By contrast, people in monochronic cultures, such as Northern Europe and North America, prefer to focus on 'one thing at a time'. They adhere to their schedules and tend to be task-oriented. They generally meet up with fewer people at the same time and value their privacy. Of course, such statements are generalizations and different degrees of polychronicity and

monochronicity, along with many exceptions, can be found in every culture. For instance, in North America, which is categorized as a monochronic culture, women such as a wife, a mother, a nurse etc. are likely to be highly proficient at multitasking. And even within American culture, generally men are more likely to be task-oriented, while women tend to prioritize relationships (Hall 1983:52–53).

However, Hall's theory suffers from serious drawbacks. Many quantitative researchers criticize the theory on the grounds that their results are not consistent with Hall's ethnography. For example, polychronicity has been positively correlated with striving and achievement, and with impatience and irritability; it has also been reported that polychronic people are often in a hurry (Conte *et al*. 1999), and that polychronic entrepreneurs prefer to work fast (Bluedron and Martin 2008). These results stand in opposition to Hall's observations and predictions. Therefore, Palmer and Schoorman (1999), who also carried out qualitative research, argues that the polychronic and monochronic aspects of multitasking and other dimensions such as cultural contexts, time-use preferences and time sense should be considered separately from each other. Moreover, as Hall admitted in an interview, nowadays it has become difficult to judge which cultures are polychronic and which monochronic due to social, cultural and technological changes within each society (Bluedorn 1998). However, despite these limitations in Hall's dichotomy in terms of time and action preferences, the polychronic/monochronic theory as an index of multitasking for individuals and organizations is frequently used in the field of business management (Bluedorn *et al.* 1999; Lindquist and Scarborough 2007). In the same sense, I would like to use it as a heuristic device for describing multitasking by individuals and for understanding *nagara* listening, even though the polychronic theory suggested by Hall has its shortcomings

Polychronic culture can be equated with listening as multitasking, but a major drawback of Hall's approach is that his theory deals only with tasks and actions, but not with the acts and gestures such as eye contact and momentary bodily movements in which listeners are often involved. In addition, since Hall makes no mention of a hierarchy of tasks or actions, it is probably safe to conclude that his theory indicates that people in polychronic cultures are involved in non-hierarchical multitasking.

Thus far, Goffman's concept explains involvements, including actions and acts, only as hierarchical behaviour, whereas Hall's polychronic-culture theory treats involvements as non-hierarchical actions, but excluding acts or gestures. Consequently, both theories have limitations

when applied to the analysis of listening behaviour, therefore, *nagara* listening, which includes both hierarchical and non-hierarchical actions and acts, can be viewed as a useful extension of these two theories. Furthermore, this variety of interactions shows the complex mechanisms of performing as a listener. Then, why do listeners offer this complicated listening? What would be the benefits for listeners and other communicators? In the next section, I focus on these questions.

6.2 Creating an appropriate distance

Why do listeners act in this complicated way? What would be the benefits for listeners and other communicators? One possibility is that *nagara* listeners are attempting to adjust a comfortable psychological distance between themselves and their interlocutors by means of various actions and acts, and to thereby create a smooth conversation.

In accordance with the rule of social order/situational proprieties (Goffman 1963:24; 1966:11), people in interactive communication are obliged to fit in a situation. They ensure that they do not attract undue attention to themselves, while also not avoiding attention either and act without disturbing harmony. As listeners, people also adjust the degree of their focus and attention on speakers by means of *nagara* listening according to the level of formality and to their roles (I will discuss these factors in detail in the next section). Listeners may increase their attention to speakers by looking at or gazing at them, or they may reduce the level of attention by conducting side or other main involvements, which allow them to look away from the speaker.

An interesting example of such balanced attention by *nagara* listeners in a serious and potentially embarrassing conversation can be seen in the Japanese TV drama 'Around 40: Women with many orders' (TBS, 2008) in which a father talks with Satoko, his grown-up daughter, in his medical examination room at night (Episode 1, 28:00–29:33). The father, while tidying up the room, says to his daughter, 'I'm surprised that you're becoming more and more like your mother (who passed away).' He does not look at Satoko, and glances at her only once. Satoko says, '*Ehh?*' and looks at her father with mild surprise, 'Do I really look that old? Please stop it!' Her father continues tidying the room, changes his position and smiles slightly. They have eye contact and exchange smiles for a moment, before her father walks to the other desk. Satoko says, 'That's right. She passed away when she was 40, didn't she? I'll soon be that old, but I don't feel as though I am at all.' She stands up, follows her father and leans against a shelf in front of him. He replies:

'Tatsuya [her younger brother] talks as though he raised himself to be an adult, but you acted just like a substitute mother for him.' He tidies the books on the shelves, crouching down without making eye contact. Then he stands up and, glancing at his daughter, says, 'You have only known heavy responsibility.' He sits down on a chair and holds a pen in order to start working at his desk. Satoko replies, 'Why are you talking about this, all of a sudden? It was difficult for you too, wasn't it? [...]' and continues talking while looking at her father. He carries on working, looking at Satoko just once, but generally directing his gaze to his desk as a listener. He replies, '[...] That's why you don't find it easy to be indulged (*omae ga amae beta ni natta noha*).' She responds 'I'm relying on this household now. I've come round here to eat three times this week,' but her father does not look up at her. He makes his final comment, 'Well, as long as we can keep on doing that,' and looks up at her.

In this example, both as a speaker and as a listener, the father shows his balanced self-investment by continuously being involved in *nagara* activities in order to balance the seriousness (being serious, but not too serious) of their conversation. He continues his work to create the impression that the topic of conversation is not especially serious, and does not look at Satoko, apart from a few glances while talking and listening. In a serious talk, many Japanese avoid looking at each other (Labra 1976:48; Shimizu 1968:206–207). Therefore, the father's behaviour connotes his seriousness too.

Goffman uses the concept of 'margins of disinvolvement' to describe how people often make a show of not completely focusing on one activity (Goffman 1963:60). According to Goffman, people show that they are not entirely invested in the main involvement by maintaining a 'slight margin of self-command and self-possession' in order to demonstrate an 'appropriate' degree of investment, except in the case of activities such as exams or sporting competitions which require applying themselves completely to the task in hand. For example, an individual displays this 'margin of disinvolvement and self-possession' when he slips while walking along the road and reacts with a little smile on his face (Goffman 1963:60). English people often feign not to be too earnest in their work or even during exams, and when they speak they understand the rule of 'not being too earnest', and their listeners understand whether they are being earnest or not (Fox 2005:62, 180). This rule of maintaining a margin of self-possession can also be applied to listeners. Listeners show an appropriate personal investment through engaging in nagara listening.

Just as an appropriate self-investment does not signify a complete investment of the self, overly attentive listening does not always mean that listeners listen well and carefully. According to Jean-Paul Sartre (1957:60): 'The attentive pupil who wishes to be attentive, his eyes riveted on the teacher, his ears open wide, so exhausts himself in playing the attentive role that he ends up by no longer hearing anything'. In the original French text, the phrase translated as 'no longer hearing anything' is 'finit par ne plus rien écouter' (Sartre 1943). Sartre uses the word 'écouter' (to listen) rather than 'entendre' (to hear), so a more literal translation would be 'he ends up by no longer listening to anything.' A possible reason for overly attentive listeners not always listening carefully is the limits provided by their 'currently available central processing capacity' (Imhof, 1998); people do not have an endless capacity to listen and can become saturated and fatigued. Through *nagara* activities, listeners can discreetly avoid giving their full attention to a speaker, thus conserving their energy so that they can continue to pay an acceptable level of attention throughout the interaction.

In this section, I have discussed one of the reasons listeners engage in *nagara* listening. It allows them to generate balanced attention, in other words, a margin of disinvolvement, and as a result, this creates a proper psychological distance. *Nagara* listeners can hereby control their face and body posture, eye contact and hand movements, all of which indicates either their focused or dispersed attention.

6.3 Auxiliary Artefacts

Nagara listeners often use small material things to govern both their eyes and hands, which eventually helps manage their balanced attention. For example, in cafés in Tokyo, I found such examples: listening while touching a cup of coffee, holding a fork to eat cake, using a smartphone or laptop, touching one's hair/lip/ears/neck/arms/hands/nails, using a pen to write memos, spinning a pen, moving a pram, toying with one's hair, removing a wristwatch. These objects serve as a focus for hands and eyes, which allows listeners to control their psychological adjustment and eventually maintain a smooth conversation. Through observing customers in bars in San Fransisco, sociologist Sherry Cavan (1966:57) also confirms that toying with a glass or ashtray functions to create a smooth conversation. Therefore, I name these objects 'auxiliary artefacts'.

Similarly, Goffman (1963:103, 154) refers to 'safe supplies', which are innocuous topics to talk about or activities such as knitting or smoking a pipe that interlocutors get involved in to avoid potentially awkward silences. Auxiliary artefacts consist of only material aids for interactions while safe supplies include both tangible and intangible aids. Therefore, a category of auxiliary artefacts is a subset of safe supplies.

Auxiliary artefacts, however, differ from 'social facilitator'. Developing Goffman' safe supplies, sociologist Stephen Harold Riggins (1990:351) describes that some material things give not only safe interactive moments but also a different structure or dynamics in an interaction. He coins the name 'social facilitator'. For example, in a game, a deck of cards creates partners and opponents, but if the cards are exhibited as ornaments, they do not function as a social facilitator. The category of social facilitator, therefore, overlaps with that of auxiliary artefacts in the way that both sustain interactions and supply safe moments. However, auxiliary artefacts do not necessarily change the dynamic of the interaction and even so, these objects still help *nagara* listeners in subtle ways to maintain the current interaction smoothly.

Hostess clubs make the best of auxiliary artefacts. In a hostess, several items are put on a table. These may include bottles of water, paper napkins, small ashtrays, a matchbox, glasses and small snacks. These items generate opportunities for both hostesses and customers to look away and occupy their hands, which in turn allows them to control the level of disinvolvement. The most typical *nagara* listening for hostesses is making alcohol while listening to their customers, which is the first challenge that novice hostesses have to overcome. When starting to work as a hostess, I felt it was difficult to mix drinks, keep eye contact and develop a conversation at the same time, but the more I got used to this *nagara* listening, the wider my field of vision and hearing became. Eventually, I realised that my hands and eyes started working automatically while I intentionally focused on listening to customers. The more experienced hostesses are, the less they give the impression of multitasking.

Sometimes auxiliary artefacts provide a safe haven for *nagara* listeners. Once I saw that a young hostess was wiping water drops off everyone's glasses frequently and tidying up a table constantly while everyone else was having a conversation. She had failed to join the conversation but was not allowed to leave the table, so she needed to avoid being awkward. Thus, she occupied her hands and eyes by wiping and tidying as if she was hearing the conversation but too busy to

listen to others. In another case, I observed visitors of a listening volunteering open-café[xxxvi], where anyone (mainly local elderly people) can come and have conversations with listening volunteers and other visitors over green tea, coffee or small sweets. One day, two male senior visitors sat at a counter table next to each other, looking at cups of green tea that they were holding in their hands. Being occupied with the cups as auxiliary artefacts seemed to allow them to have a socially acceptable break from their conversation and be silent for a while. Their activity with the cups functioned as a 'safe supply'.

It is helpful to consider the reasons why people go to a coffee shop or restaurant to chat, or why they often prepare food and drink when they invite friends to their own houses. It is not necessarily that people are hungry or thirsty, or that the host wants to make their guests feel welcome by serving food. Listeners need auxiliary artefacts to control their body, especially their hands and eyes. If people do not have anything to eat or drink in front of them, they cannot divert their eyes or occupy their hands. In that case, they must turn their faces and bodies towards the speakers and engage in a high degree of eye contact, devoting their full attention to listening. Consequently, listeners may feel stress and exhaustion, while speakers may feel nervous, pressured or uncomfortable that the interaction is being conducted too intimately, or feel guilty that their listener is sacrificing their time to devote themselves to listening. English people often make tea when they feel uncomfortable or awkward in conversation (Fox 2005:312) and, in the same way, going to a café to eat or drink as *nagara* involvements reduces some sense of social unease and creates a comfortable psychological distance between speaker and listener.

In this section, I have proposed auxiliary artefacts, which are small material things that facilitate listeners' focus or divert attention.

6.4 Mechanism of *nagara* listening: purpose, environment and status

In the previous section, we have seen how *nagara* listeners can manage a comfortable interaction by controlling self-investment by several actions and acts. What, then, determines the

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[xxxvi] Listening volunteers in Japan are called *keichō borantia* (active listening volunteers). Usually in their 60s and 70s, these people learn a skill called active listening and mostly offer their services to elderly people (but not restricted to that age group) in different ways: visiting individuals' houses; visiting elderly people's nursing homes; or running an open-café where everyone can come to talk. These volunteers attempt to support elderly people towards healthier and less lonely lives.

types and degree of *nagara* listening? There are many elements to be considered: such as the purpose of a situation, the physical environment, the time/timing, individual's statuses and roles in a situation, gender, motivations, people's attires, language uses and dynamics of individuals' relationships. In this section, I investigate the purpose, physical environment and individuals' social statuses and roles, because they clearly show the effect on *nagara* listening behaviour during my observations.

6.4.1 The purpose and physical environment

The purpose of a meeting and the physical environment govern the level of formality of situations – in Goffman's terms (1963:199), how 'tight' or 'loose' people judge the situations to be – which influence the types and degree of *nagara* listening.

A funeral provides an example of a formal situation where people need to be serious and grieve due to the specific purpose of the situation. Because of this level of formality, individuals know that laughing, eating and drinking, or checking their smartphone are not appropriate side and subordinate involvements when listening to a priest reading a sutra as the main involvement, unlike having coffee with friends at a café. In the Japanese comedy film, '*Osōshiki*' [The funeral] (ATG, 1984), around ten people gather in a home for a funeral (1:14:51–1:17:37). When the priest starts reading a sutra, they sit Japanese style on the floor behind him, close their eyes, join their hands in prayer and listen to the sutra. One of them starts crying, and she covers her mouth with a white handkerchief. Two children start fighting and become noisy, so some of the adults try to stop them. Five of the adults start to feel pins and needles in their feet, therefore they try to move their feet or slightly change the way they are sitting. Suddenly, a phone rings, so one of them jumps up to take the call, but he stumbles because of his numb feet. The others try to stifle their laughter.

In this case, listening to the sutra with eyes closed and hands together is the main and dominant involvement. Shifting one's sitting position and flexing one's feet can be defined as side and subordinate involvements, even if people's minds have momentarily drifted from the funeral. It is because they do not disturb or significantly alter the necessary position to carry out the main and dominant involvements. Crying can also be a side and subordinate involvement, as well as a main involvement because it can be a part of listening and condoling. Children's' squabbling, however, is not considered an appropriate side activity at a funeral, for which reason the adults stop it. People try to stifle their laughter, as they recognize that this too is not appropriate behaviour.

In this situation, it is likely that people recognize the formality of the occasion in advance with its corresponding degrees and types of involvement.

In addition to the purposes of the situation, the physical environment also determines the degree of formality and therefore influences *nagara* listening. For instance, on the Shōnan Fujisawa campus of Keio University where I have conducted fieldwork, there are two types of large lecture rooms: one is a circular-sector-shaped room with a 200-inch and a 120-inch DLP projector seating a maximum of 386 students; and the other is a rectangular-shaped room with two 150-inch DLP projectors seating a maximum of 285 students. The lecturer usually stands on a stage at the front of the room, speaks with a microphone and uses a screen to show slides. The rooms are usually brightly lit, apart from when the lights are turned off to show videos. Lectures are attended by at least 100 students in four different academic years. Five of the six lecturers whom I observed allowed the students to eat and drink during their lectures.

I noticed a wide range of side and subordinate behaviour by students sitting in the front rows of the large lecture rooms: these include writing lecture notes, or looking at the screen and at handouts, which can also be categorized as main or dominant involvements that are part of students' roles besides listening per se. Regarding the middle and back rows, other side and subordinate involvements that I found were sending messages on smartphones and laptops, watching YouTube, Facebook and other websites, playing games, preparing presentations, writing essays, studying languages, reading textbooks unrelated to the subject of the lecture, and sleeping. I saw whispering and eating snacks as both side and subordinate involvements by students sitting in the back rows or on the far left and right-hand sides; touching one's body or stroking one's hair, especially by female students; napping as a subordinate involvement by students in afternoon lectures.

By contrast, in smaller seminar rooms, which are typically approximately 30 square meters and can accommodate a maximum of 40 people, at least 6 students attended. While a lecturer was talking, the students showed main involvements such as writing lecture notes, laughing to what the lecturer said, checking a dictionary, looking at a textbook, and turning a page of a book. They also displayed side behaviour but they were quite limited; scratching one's arm, touching one's lip or neck with the finger and stroking one's hair. This was seemingly the case because they, as listeners, had to show more attention than students in a larger room.

Therefore, although having the same purpose – listening to a lecture and learning – the physical environments changed the degree and types of *nagara* listening. Students in a large lecture

room were often involved in a variety of types of side and subordinate involvements, while those in a smaller seminar were focused on their main or dominant involvements through deeply investing themselves and were engaged in limited side involvements. It can be concluded that as the physical distance between speakers and listeners increases, so does the extent of side or subordinate involvements permitted to students increase.

However, different combinations of the purpose and the physical environment create different unwritten rules for listeners. For example, even if the size of the funeral hall is expanded, this probably does not change the level of formality of the situation, therefore listeners' permitted side or subordinate involvements in the funeral might not be diversified.

In summary, the purpose and the physical environment, which affect the level of formality of a situation, shape the degree and types of *nagara* listening. The different combinations of the purposes and the environment produce a variety of unwritten rules for listeners to follow.

6.4.2 Individuals' statuses and roles

One of the other aspects which guide people to acknowledge acceptable *nagara* listening in a given situation is social status and roles. The following two examples reveal cases where *nagara* listeners are evaluated differently due to their social statuses although they are involved in similar *nagara* listening.

Matsushima Midori, a 60-year-old female Japanese politician, was severely criticized in the media after her listening behaviour at a committee meeting of the Japanese parliament was broadcast on TV (YouTube online, accessed March 2016). While sitting next to a young male politician, (who is standing and explaining to the committee an issue of diplomacy), she sits somewhat slumped in her seat with her left elbow on the table and pats her hair with her left hand. She looks at someone in front of her once, and then with her left elbow on the table touches her lips. She puts her right hand on a book on the table and looks in front of her again. Matsushima then straightens her back, rubs her left eye, folds her arms across her chest and yawns. She then takes her mobile phone and looks at it with her back hunched. She yawns again and starts reading the book that is lying on the table, picking it up in both hands to continue reading while leaning back in her chair. She touches the frame of her glasses and her lips with her left hand and holds the book in the right hand.

In this case, merely attending the committee was judged to be an insufficient display of involvement in the main activity, and her side and subordinate involvements of checking her phone and reading a book were considered to have superseded the main and dominant involvement of listening to the speaker. As a result, observers of her behaviour concluded that she was not listening at all. From the video, it is not clear whether or not she was keeping 'one ear open' to hear the talk, but it is evident from the criticism levelled at her that what was required as a politician in this situation was to demonstrate that she was listening rather than simply 'keeping one ear open'.

Similar behaviour to Matsushima in other situations is not always criticized as not listening. In my fieldwork at Keio University in Japan (13,14/01/2016), during an afternoon lecture, I observed about 50 students in a large lecture room capable of seating 285. A male student wearing a traditional uniform (an indication that he belongs to one of the university sports clubs) sits slightly behind the middle row and places his large black bag on the left-hand side of the desk. He opens his laptop in front of him, opens a textbook which is not related to the lecture in front of his laptop and reads it while chewing gum. He sometimes uses his smartphone in front of his opened laptop but does not turn his face to look at the lecturer, who is speaking at the front. Then he folds his arms on the desk, places his head on them and begins to sleep.

The student in this example tried to hide his side and subordinate involvements behind his opened laptop in order to maintain the appearance of attending to the main and dominant involvement, namely, listening to the lecture. Sleeping would appear to threaten this as it precludes paying any attention to the lecture. However, dozing in a lecture is often permitted as a subordinate involvement in Japan, because expressing attention and deference is displayed by attending the lecture (Steger 2003). Despite his side and subordinate involvements, the student was not criticised by the lecturer and probably was judged to be still engaged in listening by just attending. Thus, although Matsushima and this student were involved in similar *nagara* listening, only the former's listening behaviour was criticized. Individuals' statuses and roles changed the acceptable degree and types of *nagara* listening.

However, it also seems possible to see that the differences of acceptable *nagara* listening occur due to the formality of situations; the former is a committee meeting in the Japanese parliament and the latter is a lecture in a university. Therefore, to clarify the significance of social statuses and roles on the types of *nagara* listening, examples of similar *nagara* listening in similar

settings between those who have different social statuses should be compared for the further research.

Dozing or sleeping *nagara* listening seems to have an exceptional position in Japanese contexts. It is common for politicians to sleep during parliamentary sessions in Japan where they should be listeners (e.g. the censure of Naoto Kan napping in the Budget Committee of the Upper House of the Diet 3/10/2010). Steger (2003) observes that sleeping in the workplace in Japan is often viewed as the result of hard work and of having sacrificed night-time sleep due to work responsibilities. Mizutani Osamu, a male commentator in a TV show called *Bibit* also commented that in the case of Matsushima Midori, sleeping would have been acceptable, but not reading or using a mobile phone (YouTube online, accessed August 2016). Much criticism centred on these activities because they were judged to be less acceptable and more offensive than sleeping, despite the fact that, unlike sleep, they do not preclude the possibility of hearing and remaining aware of the main activity.

Another interesting example on social statuses is provided by Okuda Aki, a university student who politely requested the MPs before whom he was about to speak to refrain from sleeping, the implication being that they were likely to do this due to his youth and humble status as a student (YouTube online, accessed August 2016). If it is true that the acceptability of side and subordinate involvements increases along with the relative status of the listener, then Matsushima Midori, as a relatively high-ranking politician, may have been judged that it was acceptable for her to check her phone and read a book while listening to someone of lower status than herself.

Therefore, two more aspects appear to be considered concerning the criticism towards her. First, a gender aspect; she might have been singled out for criticism due to being a woman who did not listen to a male politician. This aspect requires further research. Second, reading and watching; this type of behaviour impedes listening and pull a listener's eyes from a speaker, which could indicate indifference or an unfocused mind of a listener to a speaker. According to conversation analysis, a listener has to gaze at a speaker when the speaker looks at the listener as a fundamental conversational rule (Goodwin, 1981:73, 1984:230). However, in Matsushima's case, she was sitting next to the speaker, not in front of the speaker, and the speaker never saw her directly. Therefore, in her case, due to her role, where she looked was important as a listener. For a student, attending lectures satisfies the criteria of being a listener, although he is not looking at the lecturer.

Similarly, in the following case – TV drama 'Around 40' (TBS, 2008), (Episode 1, 6:43–7:28) – *nagara* listeners are judged as not listening due to reading and watching. Mizue, a 39-year-old housewife and her salaryman husband are in their living room late in the evening. He is sitting at the dining table eating supper using chopsticks while reading a magazine. Mizue is standing by the table tidying up her son's lunch box. She asks her husband if she can buy a new dress for her high school reunion party. He makes eye contact with her while making some negative comments, and then continues eating and reading without looking at her, while she explains why it is important for her to have a new dress. Suddenly, his mobile phone rings. He picks it up, stands up and leaves the living room although Mizue is still talking.

In this example, although her husband makes some reply to her question, it appears that Mizue felt that she was being treated as less than important. It is because of his negative response and his offensive *nagara* listening of continuing to read and eat with limited eye contact, which made her wonder if he was listening or not. Matsushima's and Mizue's case disclose the importance of the positions of the eyes of listeners.

In this section, I discussed the aspects which influence the types and degree of *nagara* listening. The examples of the purposes of the situations, such as a funeral or a meeting in a parliament, showed that while listening, people were permitted to flex their feet or to change their sitting position but were not allowed to squabble, to laugh, to read a book or to look at their phone in these situations where a high level of formality was required. In university lectures, although the situation was formal, the larger the lecture room was, the more diverse the range of side or subordinate involvements became. In the cases of a meeting in a parliament and a university lecture, the same types of *nagara* listening were criticised only in the former. This indicated that not only the purposes but also individuals' social statuses and roles determine permitted side or subordinate involvements. The combination of these different elements generates different tacit rules for people while listening.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed *nagara* listening. I began by looking at how listeners often engage in several actions/acts at the same time, as this was the predominant type of listening behaviour

that I observed in my fieldwork. I coined the term '*nagara* listening' and 'auxiliary artefacts', based on a Japanese grammatical means of describing simultaneous activities.

To establish a framework, I discussed *nagara* listening using two theories. First, I examined the limitation of Goffman's theory (1963) in that it describes involvements in hierarchical order – main/side and dominant/subordinate –, whereby listeners are regarded as prioritizing one involvement over others. However, my ethnographic observations provided examples of listeners who were engaged in various activities without any obvious prioritization. Second, I compared *nagara* listening to Hall's theory of polychronic culture (1983) which describes multitasking culture, but without considering hierarchical behavior; his theory also does not include voluntary and involuntary bodily movements, acts or gesture, such as eye contact, hand movement or the turning of one's face. As an extension of Goffman's and Hall's theories, the concept of *nagara* listening overcomes these limitations by including both hierarchical and non-hierarchical involvements, as well as all the actions and acts observed in listening behaviour.

This essay also explored the reasons why listeners engage in *nagara* listening and found that one purpose was to make a conversation smooth by creating a comfortable psychological distance between the listener and the speaker. Without the side or subordinate involvements, a listener can become exhausted by devoting their full attention to a speaker, and the speaker can feel stressed or pressured by the focused attention of the listener. Therefore, people carry out *nagara* listening, attempting to balance self-investment, which is called a margin of disinvolvement (Goffman 1963:60). They often use auxiliary artefacts – things such as a mobile phone, fork or pencil – to occupy their eyes and hands and in that way sustain their *nagara* activities.

Following on from this, I explored the various factors that influence the degree and types of *nagara* involvement: these included the purposes of the situations and the physical environment, which influence the level of formality of a situation, as well as individuals' social statuses and roles. In addition, for further research, I suggested other potential elements, such as the eye position and gender, and the significance of different combinations of these aspects to generate different tacit interactional rules for people while listening.

These analyses of *nagara* listening have demonstrated that listeners are generally involved in some actions and acts/gestures simultaneously. Therefore *nagara* listening itself is one of the tacit rules which all participants in interactions follow to become a listener.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

In this conclusion, I re-examine the research questions: What is a good listener? And what does it mean to become such a listener in contemporary Japan? First of all, I re-state the various types of listening that experienced listeners use, and I discuss the three main tacit rules of being a good listener in Japan. Following this, I discuss what listening is. I propose that listening is not simply a skill but is the way one relates to others. Just as a craftsman learns both basic skills and their own ways of communicating with their materials and tools, a good listener needs to acquire both fundamental skills and their own unique experiences with others.

7.1 The Japanese art of listening

Momo, a female protagonist in a fantasy novel written by Michael Ende (1984), is often mentioned as the ideal listener by AL volunteers. The following is a quote from the novel;

No, what Momo was better at than anyone else was listening.

Anyone can listen, you may say – what's so special about that? – but you'd be wrong. Very few people know how to listen properly, and Momo's way of listening was quite unique.

She listened in a way that made slow-witted people have flashes of inspiration. It wasn't that she actually said anything or asked questions that put such ideas into their heads. She simply sat there and listened with the utmost attention and sympathy, fixing them with her big, dark eyes, and they suddenly became aware of ideas whose existence they had never suspected.

Momo could listen in such a way that worried and indecisive people knew their own minds from one moment to the next, or shy people felt suddenly confident and at ease, or downhearted people felt happy and hopeful. And if someone felt that his life had been an utter failure, and that he himself was only one among millions of wholly unimportant people who could be replaced as easily as broken windowpanes, he would go and pour out his heart to Momo. And, even as he spoke, he would come to realize by some mysterious means that he was absolutely wrong: that there was only one person like himself in the whole world, and that, consequently, he mattered to the world in his own particular way.

Such was Momo's talent for listening. (Ende 1984:17)

Momo listens to people attentively and empathetically, making eye contact without asking questions or giving advice, which are some of the key elements of the ideal listener I have discussed. However, in Japan, this style of listening is not sufficient for a person to become a truly good listener. The listener also has to recognise hierarchy, including elements of gender, age, social roles, server-customer and helper-helpee, which requires reading and prediction skills; they need to maintain a psychological distance with interlocutors; and they must skilfully manage their bodies and minds as naturally as possible. This sensitivity towards hierarchy, and heavy investment of energy in emotional labour, are essential to the art of listening in Japan. It does not mean that this type of communication does not exist in other places, but I would like to emphasise the importance of these aspects for listeners in Japan. On the other hand, listening attentively or therapeutically – or *nagara* listening – can be found as an essential element in other cultures or societies.

In order to fulfil these criteria in Japan, experienced listeners deploy various kinds of listening, such as therapeutic listening, zealous listening, a 'do not become too self-assertive but do not hold back too much' listening style, a 'never give up' listening style, *kūki o yomu*, a *tsukkomi-boke* response, exaggerated reactions, manipulation of language styles, teamwork listening, snack-bar style listening, surface-acting listening, deep-acting listening, listening obliquely and *nagara* listening. In the following section, I re-address the concept of these types of listening.

Therapeutic and zealous listening show the importance of acknowledging and maintaining the current hierarchy. Identifying the hierarchy is one of the most important, unwritten roles of listeners in Japan, therefore manuals on listening advise therapeutic listening for people in power and zealous listening for subordinates. Therapeutic listening allows a listener to become caring and empathetic in relation to a speaker's issue, to perform less authoritatively and to let a speaker face a problem by her/himself. Through this process, the listener wins the speaker's trust and remains in a helper position, latently keeping her/his power over the speaker. So this is a type of supportive listening, and this can be described as 'a mask of silent authority'.

AL volunteers typically, but not always, use therapeutic listening. They ask questions without being inquisitive, empathetically display their facial expressions, reflect what clients said, frequently show *aizuchi* and *unazuki*, smile as much as possible when it is appropriate and do not criticise, discuss or advise. For them, listening is a tool for reaching out to others. However, even though their act of helping constitutes an altruistic value, devoted listening is often perceived as a

gift which obliges receivers to return something. Therefore, some clients attempt to listen to the volunteers, to entertain them or to tell them something that will be beneficial for them. The experienced volunteers intentionally or unintentionally receive and accept these kinds of behaviour from their clients, conceal their authoritative power by hunching, smiling, articulating empathetic comments, attempt to learn from their clients or enjoy time together.

Conversely, zealous listening encourages a listener to become interested in a speaker, to ask questions actively, to articulate enthusiastic or entertaining replies and to impersonate the role of an aspiring learner. In this way, the listener maintains a subordinate status, keeps showing her/his respect and ingratiates her/himself with the speaker. This listening allows a subordinate listener indirectly to control a conversation without holding the floor and without offending or threatening a speaker. In this way, the listener eventually gains a speaker's trust and favour. Therefore, this listening can become 'an interactional weapon of the weak'.

Hostesses take full advantage of such a benefit by performing zealous listening. Through this listening, they entertain customers and contribute to a *moriagaru* conversation, which is a type of successful conversation. While strategically staying as a subordinate and supportive listener, they fill the silence, keep up a conversation, ask questions, make witty *tsukkomi/boke,* tease or accept teasing, laugh a lot and never hold the floor of a conversation. In this way, male customers can dominate a conversation and feel satisfaction. This type of communication reproduces the gendered division of labour in interaction. But, as a result, hostesses gain money, networks, and protection from male customers, therefore their listening is 'an interactional weapon of the weak'.

Hostesses also show certain attitudes and techniques as listeners. They control their self-assertiveness, which I call applying the 'do not become too self-assertive but do not hold back too much listening style'. They keep a conversation going by asking questions, making short comments, praising customers and raising topics of conversation, but they do not talk for long or hold the floor. Even if no one reacts to their questions or comments, hostesses have to keep the conversation going, which I name the 'never give up listening style'. In order to entertain customers, hostesses read and predict the emotions, intentions and desires of the customers at the top of the hierarchy, which is called '*kūki o yomu'*. They also become a *tsukkomi/boke* master, who gives witty replies or articulates an out-of-context remark, and a reaction king, who displays exaggerated reactions. They skilfully manipulate different types of languages such as honorific,

casual, local or women's language, in order to play with hierarchy and manipulate intimacy. They sometimes offer teamwork listening too. For hostesses, listening is a streetwise skill.

Although I mainly discussed the therapeutic listening performed by AL volunteers and the zealous listening performed by hostesses in this research, in reality, they flexibly switch these two listening styles and sometimes mix them. Therapeutic listening is a useful tool for hostesses to create a compassionate, maternal atmosphere while zealous listening allows the volunteers to learn from clients and to conceal their helper positions.

Snack-bar style listening means offering a cosy and narrow conversational environment and a comfortable amount of interactional intervention/engagement by someone who reads the flow and power balance of a conversation. Hostess clubs and one of the AL volunteering groups I witnessed provide this style of listening.

With regard to emotional labour and listening, I found three types of listening. First, deep-acting listening means a listener listens to someone by showing situationally or socially expected attitudes and creating socially required emotions in the mind by dismissing other emotions which do not align with the outward expressions. Some hostesses got involved in deep-acting listening by imagining that customers were just babies who needed attention. A few hostesses offered deep-acting listening out of genuine respect or by believing that it was the professional way to behave. AL volunteers often engaged in this listening as they were socially expected to become benevolent caregivers.

Second, surface-acting listening means a listener listens to someone by displaying expected attitudes without changing their own emotions which do not correspond to their surface-acting. Hostesses often listened to customers' harsh words and tolerated their mean attitudes by performing this type of listening. Therefore this listening signifies silent resistance of the listener. AL volunteers also did this listening; however, they did not want to admit it.

'Listening obliquely' is located between deep-acting listening and surface-acting listening. This especially enables a listener to become inquisitive about speakers, to analyse and understand them, and to create a new perspective with respect to the speakers, while maintaining the listener's original feelings towards them. This is a rational and gradual way to maintain contradictory emotions towards speakers.

Nagara listening reveals what every listener, including occupational and non-occupational listeners, does as a listener. Listeners are involved in several actions/acts at the same time, which

involves using material things, such as listening while eating with a fork or touching one's own hair. I coined the term '*nagara* listening' and 'auxiliary artefacts'. Such listening helps listeners in controlling a margin of disinvolvement (an appropriate degree of seriousness/formality in interactions) and as a result, allows listeners to have a smooth conversation.

All of the different types of listening I have referred to here teach us three main unwritten rules of being a good listener in contemporary Japan. Firstly, the listener has to acknowledge and deal with the hierarchy or power relations. She/he should not directly challenge the hierarchy, and therefore eventually reproduces the current hierarchy. Secondly, the listener manages different types of distances, such as psychological distance (the level of intimacy) and a margin of disinvolvement (the degree of formality). Finally, this listener needs to control not only physical elements, such as eyes, hands, face or other parts of the body, but also the mind.

These three tacit rules indicate another aspect of listening: it is a way of relating to others. Listening is not simply a way of hearing or understanding. Religious scholar Horie Norichika (Fromm and Horie 2012:329–333) discusses his understanding of psychologist and psychoanalyst Erich Fromm's phrase 'the art of listening' as referring to the way of interaction (*furumai-kata*) (Horie translates 'art' as *waza*). His analysis reflects something AL volunteers told me: simply being together is one way of listening. AL volunteers and hostesses strive to identify the best way to associate with others through listening. When I interviewed him (30/3/2017), clinical psychologist Shiotani Tōru asked: 'The way you are talking about listening probably means the way of engaging with others (*kakawari kata*), right?' In her essay, dramaturg Sodja Lotker (2018) similarly concludes that listening is a way of standing by others and describes the multiple ways of listening in this sense: as a female and a foreigner, she listens to people in order 'to obey in the right way, to join the system, not to make mistakes, and to be good'. Therefore it is a form of survival and disciplinary listening. As a dramaturg, she listens to artists, helping them in articulating and finding their potential. As a teacher, she has dialogues with her students by listening to and helping them to realise their thoughts. She says listening is her craft and believes 'that sharpening our listening and being aware of the listening can help us to think and be with others'. As these people realise, listening is not simply a tool or skill to offer an understanding of others or an exchange of words, but also the way of associating with others. Therefore, what I researched is 'the art of listening', something which psychologists and linguistics overlook.

Listening is a way to engage with others, so learning listening skills alone does not make a person a good listener. As a hostess and AL volunteer, I learnt that a good listener has not merely acquired useful skills, which everyone can learn, nor have they simply received inborn artistic talents, which no one can mimic; rather they have learnt listening as an art, like a professional artisan or craftsman who cultivates her/his hands, body, mind and skills over a long time. The hostesses, AL volunteers and other occupational listeners I met, such as bartenders or hairdressers, spend a great deal of time improving their fundamental listening skills, as well as developing their own listening styles. Similarly, Horie (Fromm and Horie 2012:329–333) emphasises that Fromm's understanding of the art of listening is listening based on predecessors' teachings and accumulations of experience. Rogers (1951:19–22) also criticises the tendency to overemphasise techniques of counselling (listening) and insists on the importance of having both trained techniques and 'respect for others'. A good listener has skills and embodies their own ways to relate to others.

In this research, I found what the ideal listener is and what it means to be such a listener in contemporary Japan. However, the ideal listener might differ in other societies and cultures. How do people in other societies perceive and evaluate listening? How do listeners in different cultures deal with different ages, genders, social statuses or languages? How do other occupational listeners understand and acquire listening? If a speaker is a child or if a speaker speaks a second language, how does this affect the way of listening? Such questions could even go beyond the human sphere, for example, in the future will AI or other technologies offer the ideal form of listening, by contrast to humans? Many questions related to listening have yet to be answered.

Appendix 1: Main informants' information

Hostess Club			
Name (Gender)	**Occupation**	**Age**	**Information/Background**
Maro-san (Male)	Business investor/ Friend of mine	32	An old friend of mine who introduced me to Minako. Maro became my customer in Club Mizuno.
Minako (Female)	Former hostess/ Entrepreneur in social welfare enterprise	40	Currently, an entrepreneur, occasionally still working as a hostess. Minako was born in Hokkaido and worked as a hostess in Hokkaido and Tokyo for 10 years. She introduced me to Katakura-sensei, who used to be her customer. She often helped me in understanding hostess' communication.
Katakura-sensei (Male)	Customer/ Playwright	60s	A famous playwright and a regular Ginza hostess-club customer. Formerly Minako's customer, he still has dinner with her sometimes. He linked me to Ogasawara-san.
Ogasawara-san (Male)	Former *kurofuku*/ Former club owner/ Chairman of a restaurant and bar club association in Ginza.	70s	Born in Kantō area, Ogasawara started working as a *kurofuku* in his teens. He worked his way to becoming an owner of several hostess clubs. After the collapse of the bubble economy, he lost all his clubs, but still has many connections with club owners and hostesses, which makes his experience authoritative in Ginza. He introduced me to Tani and Club Mizuno. He always wears a professional smile on his face.
Tani (Male)	*Kurofuku*	65	An experienced *kurofuku*, Tani hired me as a hostess. He wanted to become a novelist when he was young, so moved to Tokyo, started university and wrote novels. In order to make a living, he started working as a *kurofuku* and, has now been working in many clubs in Ginza for over 40 years. He said, 'My salary was quite good compared to other salarymen and the job was entertaining. One day I realised that I have been working in Ginza all this time and never became a novelist.'
Sayuri-mama (Female)	Owner mama (Hostess)	43	The owner-hostess of Club Mizuno. She started working as a hostess in Yokohama when she was 18 years old. She came to Ginza when she was 29, which was considered to be late to start in Ginza. However, within 10 years, she became a No1 hostess in two (or three?) clubs and she was hired as 'an employed-mama' in one of the clubs. Three years ago (2016), she started Club Mizuno. In her private life, she got married and divorced three times. She has three children, and the youngest is under 10 years old. She decided to close her club in 2019 due to financial problems. (I heard several rumours about what Sayuri-mama is doing after closing Club Mizuno: one said she completely retired; another said she was hired as an employed-mama; and the other said she opened a new club. It seems no one knows the truth.)
Yamamoto (Male)	*Kurofuku* (Manager of Club Mizuno)	36	Works as a *kurofuku* and manager of Club Mizuno. He also works as if Sayuri-mama's manager for example by handling her schedule and preparing gifts for her customers. Because of his young age and gentle personality, Sayuri-mama, high-ranking and experienced hostesses and Tani often treat him roughly.

Chief (Male)	Chef	30s	A sommelier, in charge of drink and food. I do not know how long he has been working in Ginza, but some customers invited him to sit with them, so I assume he is an experienced worker in Ginza. He seems to be a friend of Yamamoto and is a kind and quiet man. He secretly let me taste his favourite whisky from his friend's customer bottle on the last day of my work.
Kaikē no onē-san (Female)	Accountant	60s	Knows many famous regular customers in Ginza, therefore I assume she has been working in Ginza for a long time. I never saw her smile, or talked with anyone about her.
Kikuta (Female)	Works in cloakroom space	30s	Mainly works in a cloakroom, but often performs as a multi-talented person with sophisticated *kizukai* skill, equal to Sayuri-mama. She has been working in Ginza clubs for about 10 years, therefore she knows many famous regular customers in Ginza. She was pregnant at the time I worked in Club Mizuno, and said, 'After giving birth, I would like to return to Ginza soon'.
Kyōko (Female)	Hostess	39	The No1. *uriage* hostess in Club Mizuno. Kyōko has worked as a full-time hostess for nearly 20 years. She married a customer in Ginza and has a son. She is busy on her son's *ojuken* (entrance examination for prestigious elementary schools) but continues working as a hostess.
Onodera-san (Male)	Customer/ CEO of a construction company, temp agency and sweet wholesale company	60s	Owns several companies in Kansai and is Tani's customer. Onodera always behaves as a kind and easy-going person. He was the first customer I met as a hostess.
Akane (Female)	Hostess	43	An experienced, high ranking, *uriage* hostess. Akane was born in Kyushu. She has been working as a hostess since her teens in Hakata. In her late 20s, she was '*mizuage sareru*' (literally 'being landed from a boat'; meaning: resigning her hostess job to accept a proposal to be either a wife or mistress of her customer) as a mistress by one of her customers, a company owner. However, after less than ten years, his company went bankrupt and she returned to hostess work, moving to Ginza. Subsequently, she married another customer and now has a son, who attends elementary school. She says, 'I want to contribute to society. I love seeing my customer smiling. I cannot stay at home. It kills me…' She worked in several clubs in Ginza and moved to Club Mizuno because she likes and trusts Sayuri-mama.
Ishida (Female)	My hairdresser	30s	Born in Tokyo and graduated from a beauty school. She used to work in several hair salons and moved to the current salon which services hostesses. Her work partly consists of easing hostesses' minds before they go to work. On my last day of work, she gave me a bag of good-bye gifts, including *kakkontō* (a herbal medicine) and Japanese painkiller. Her thoughtful gift made me cry.
Mika (Female)	Hostess	37	The No.2 *uriage* hostess in Club Mizuno. Mika works as a full-time hostess and is hired by Club Mizuno through a temp agency. She often hangs out with hostess colleagues. She has not married yet but wishes to retire from hostess work through

			mizuage-sareru. (She went back to the previous club after Club Mizuno was closed.)
Kida-sensei (Male)	Customer/ Lawyer	80s	A lawyer and chairman of an association for Kansai lawyers. Kida is Mika's customer. He is a very cheerful person and tries to make hostesses laugh.
Anna (Female)	Hostess/ Model	32	An experienced, middle-ranking, *help* hostess who sometimes works as a model for magazines. Anna is half Australian and half Japanese, growing up in Australia until her early teens and moving to Tokyo after that. She started working as a hostess in her early 20s while working as a model. She learned Japanese through working as a hostess. She said, 'I am a model who does not earn much (*urenai moderu yatteru wa*). Since becoming 30, I cannot get much model work'.
Mio (Female)	Hostess	40	An experienced, low-ranking, *help* hostess in Club Mizuno, but an experienced and middle-ranking hostess in a Korean club, where she secretly works over weekends. Mio was born in Hokkaido, worked as a hostess, married her boyfriend there, had a son and divorced. At age 38, she moved to Ginza to work as a hostess. After Club Mizuno was closed, she started working in a Korean Club full-time, as well as part-time in a motorbike shop. She and I became close friends.
Risa (Female)	Hostess/ Former teacher	26	A novice, *help* hostess who started working immediately after me. Risa was born in Yokohama, gained her master's degree and was working as a teacher in an elementary school. She somehow met Ogasawara-san and quit her job. She said, 'Schools are exploitative enterprises (*burakku-kigyō*).' She wants to work as a full-time, professional hostess.
Mana (Female)	Hostess/ Hip-hop dance coach	24	A lower-ranking, *help* hostess. Mana works as a hip-hop dance coach during the daytime and sometimes works as a hostess. She used to work as a *help* hostess in a club where Tani was also working. After the club was closed, Tani invited her to work in Club Mizuno. She does not want to work as a hostess for a long time.
Ebihara-sensei (Male)	Customer/ Dentist	60s	A dentist in Fukuoka and Sayuri-mama's customer. Ebihara attends a conference in Tokyo once a month. On this occasion, he visits Club Mizuno. He met Sayuri-mama at a party.
Katsumata-san (Male)	Customer/ CEO of a sweet wholesale company	50s	Sayuri-mama's regular customer. Katsumata started his own company, which, although it once had many debts, is now going well. He always brings his employees to the club. He talks a lot, has a dirty mouth, wants to be in the spotlight. Although he does not often smile, he is actually a caring person.
Murata-san (Male)	Customer/ Employee of Katsumata-san's company	40s	Works in Katsumata-san's company and always accompanies Katsumata-san at Club Mizuno. Murata is relatively quiet and supports his boss's talk, and enjoys conversing with hostesses.
Takamizawa-san (Male)	Customer/ TV celebrity	70s	A famous TV personality and well-known customer in Ginza. Takamizawa is Sayuri-mama's customer and comes to Club Mizuno with many guests once every month or two. He is always very drunk, and only stays for 10 minutes or so.
Kashiwabara-san (Male)	Customer/ Chairman of his company (do not	70s	Retired CEO and Tani's favourite customer. When he was young, Kashiwabara joined a student activist movement, and then graduated from the faculty of law. After university and

	know what kind of company)		working in several companies, he established his own company, which his son inherited as a CEO. He often taught me insightful opinions about hostesses. He once compassionately told me, 'What do you intend to do after your PhD? I have met many hostesses who were highly educated and came back to Ginza because of the good salary. But you, don't come back to Ginza, ok?'
Akasaka-san (Male)	Customer/ Architect	60s	Sayuri-mama's customer. When Akasaka was in his 30s, he was working in a construction company and got involved in a big project as an architect, which became a huge success. Since then, he has been a successful architect, and established his own company. Sayuri-mama said, 'He is a fickle person. I cannot predict when he comes or what he wants'.
Togashi-san (Male)	Customer/ Employee in convenience store headquarters	60s	Tsukasa's customer. Togashi is a relatively quiet customer and does not show many facial expressions, but is a kind man.
Tsukasa (Female)	Hostess/ Secretary	40s	A high-ranking, *uriage* hostess. Tsukasa works as a hostess only when she brings her customers. She works as a CEO's secretary in the daytime.
Iwata-san (Male)	Customer/ CEO of a suit company	70s	Tani's customer and knows Kikuta too. Iwata is a bossy man and speaks roughly.
Reina (Female)	Hostess/ Former *kyabajō*	30s	An experienced, middle-ranking, *uriage* hostess. When Reina was in her teens, she worked in a *bottakuri* (rip-off) bar. After that she worked as *kyabajō* in Shinjuku and became a top *kyabajō* in her mid to late 20s many times. In her early 30s, due to getting too old to be a *kyabajō*, she moved to Ginza. However, because her conversational style did not fit Ginza clubs, she had to move from club to club. In Club Mizuno, she seems to be struggling to communicate with customers too.
Maejima-san (Male)	Customer/ CEO of a company (don't know what kind of company)	60s-70s	Sayuri-mama's regular customer (but *tantō* hostess is Kyōko). Maejima was working in his father's company and when the father passed away, he inherited the company as a CEO. He is proud of making his company 'a zero-debt company'.
Aoi (Female)	Hostess/ Secretary	34	An experienced, middle-ranking, *help* hostess. Aoi started working as a hostess in her early 20s. She often went clubbing after finishing her hostess work. In her late 20s, she got a secretarial job, so she quit hostess work for a while. However, she felt 'People in daytime jobs aren't stimulating enough. They are full of boring and *busu* (unpretty) people.' She also realised she was spending a lot of money on drinking, and could drink for free and earn more money if she worked as a hostess again. She therefore restarted working three days a week. She is interested in different cultures so can speak English. She used to work in the hostess club where Tani worked for a long time. Since they knew each other, Tani invited Aoi to work in Club Mizuno.
Hayashi-san (Male)	Customer/ Occupation unknown	70	Acted as a teacher in a conversation with five hostesses.

Emili (Female)	Hostess/ Daytime occupation unknown	20s	A lower-ranking, *help* hostess. Emili is Taiwanese but grew up in Japan so can speak fluent Japanese. She is also good at speaking English. She is a good friend of Anna. For some reason, she stopped working in Club Mizuno for a few months but restarted working.
Emi (Female)	Hostess/ Entrepreneur in a beauty industry	40s	An experienced, middle-ranking, *help* hostess. Emi wanted to be a novelist, and therefore from her 20s worked as a hostess whilst writing. Although she published a novel, she was not able to earn much money, so continued her hostess work. She is now trying to establish her own company producing and selling beauty lotions. She said, 'I need money as well as business connections for my company, that's why I am continuing hostess work.'
Nagai-san (Male)	Customer/ Owner of sushi restaurants in Ginza	50s	A famous customer who spends a lot of money every night in Ginza clubs. He has a successful sushi business in Ginza.
Yoshida-san (Male)	Customer/ Dental hygiene-related work	60s-70s	Maejima-san's guest customer, working at a company related to dental hygiene.
Baba-san (Male)	Customer/ Employee in a famous car company	60s	Tani's customer, working for a famous car company. He does not smile often, but tries to make others laugh a lot.
Tachibana-san (Male)	Customer/ Chairman of a major enterprise	70s	Sayuri-mama's regular and long-time customer. Tachibana often looks grumpy, but is a very caring and compassionate person who quickly remember new hostesses. He told me, 'She (Sayuri-mama) was a '*jaja uma*' (literally 'an unbridled horse'; meaning: an unruly girl) when she was much young.'
Matsumoto-san (Male)	Customer/ Occupation unknown	80s	Sayuri-mama's customer. He looks like a character from the 'Godfather'.
Koyama-san (Male)	Client/ Executive in a small to middle size company	50s	Tani's customer. Koyama was born in the Chūbu area.
Rina (Female)	Hostess/ A junior college student	21	A low-ranking, *help* hostess and the youngest in Club Mizuno. Rina is a student in a junior college and learning childcare. She grew up in a single-mother family, so she decided to pay her college tuition fee by herself. In addition to her desire to buy branded goods, she decided to work as a hostess, which her mother does not know. She was a friend of a *kurofuku* who used to work in Club Mizuno, so she used his connection to find work.
Hanna	Hostess/ Yoga instructor	30s	A middle-ranking, *help* hostess. Hanna is half Japanese and half English and grew up in Japan. She works as a Yoga instructor during the daytime and sometimes works in Club Mizuno. She said, 'I won't work as a hostess except for Club Mizuno. Mama and the other people are nice here.' I assume she used to work in different clubs.

AL volunteering			
Name (Gender)	**Position/ Occupation**	**Age**	**Background**
Iwamatsu (Male)	AL coach	45	An AL coach. Iwamatsu used to work in a convenience store headquarter and changed his job to a website design company, which did not go well. He started working in a company which provided educational service for adults. During that time, he learnt counselling and AL. He started providing a free counselling service twice a month in Yokohama with 10 other colleagues in 2006, became a support member for *hikikomori* (people or students who isolating from society) in 2007, helped AL volunteers and started AL workshops. In 2015, he established *Nihon keichō kyōkai* (a general incorporated foundation of the Japan Active Listening Ability Development Foundation). He published two self-help books related to AL.
Nakajima (Female)	Volunteer/ Office worker	Early 40s	An office worker in a small company and lives in Tokyo. Nakajima was interested in communication skills, so learnt AL, joined an AL volunteering group in Tokyo and gained an AL qualification from the Iwamatsu's institution. For the last three years, she was dividing her time between Tokyo and Nagano because of her husband's new position in Nagano. During that time, she joined Hanamizuki as an AL volunteer. I met Nakajima through Iwamatsu's connection (he sent an email to members of his institution to find someone who can help my research).
Akiyama (Female)	Volunteer/ Former local welfare commissioner	70s	Born in Tokyo, in her childhood Akiyama experienced evacuation during WW2, which, she said, nurtured her interest in people and in becoming friends with anyone. She worked in a company and married. Since then, she moved to her husband's hometown in Nagano. At some point in her life, she became *minsei-iin* (a local welfare commissioner) and learnt listening skills for the first time. Since then, she became interested in listening and joined workshops. She and the other 20 members from the workshops established Hanamizuki in 2009.
Morinaga-san (Male)	Client/ Farmer	80s	Born and grew up in Nagano, Morinaga is a farmer just like his father. He lives with his eldest son, who works at a local supermarket. He won a lot of agricultural competitions. He has been coping with a speech impediment for the last five years due to suffering a cerebral haemorrhage. Therefore, he converses with a member of Hanamizuki about once a month.
Takeshita (Female)	AL coach/ *Inochi no denwa* volunteer	80s	An AL coach. Takeshita has been working as a volunteer of *Inochi no denwa* (telephone hotline) for more than 30 years.

Yukawa (Male)	Volunteer/ Former civil servant in a city in Tokyo	70s	Born in the countryside in Hokkaidō, Yukawa graduated from the faculty of agriculture in Meiji University in Tokyo and worked as a civil servant, especially handling rubbish collection, nurseries, schools, hospitals and supply centres for school meals. After retiring, he wanted to contribute to local society and found an opportunity to learn AL in a workshop. He assumed that his work experiences would help him in becoming a volunteer. Since the workshop, he and the other participants established Fukurō, in which he has been involved for 9 years as an AL volunteer. He is currently a leader of Fukurō, after Okada retired from the role of leader.
Hasegawa-san (Male)	Client/ Former medical radiological technician	90	Born into a general practitioner's family in Yamaguchi, Hasegawa became a medical radiological technician, which was still a new occupation in Japan. He liked riding a motorcycle, joined a choir and sang chanson. He lost his wife in his 40s or 50s and since then has lived alone. He had kids but did not trust or rely on them. He passed away in February 2019.
Okada (Male)	Volunteer/ Former employee in a machine company	91	Used to work in a machine design and assembling company. When Okada was 79, he went to a hospital to see his friend and happened to talk with a young doctor. The doctor told him about AL volunteering, and it stayed in his mind. Two years later, he found an AL workshop by chance. After joining the workshop at aged 81, he has been involved in Fukurō for 9 years. Since 2019, he stopped his volunteering. He is now receiving caring service.
Komine-san (Male)	Client/ Former teacher	90	Born in Yamanashi, Komine used to work as a teacher in elementary schools and became a headteacher.
Hayashi (Male)	Staff member in the local council's social welfare department	40s	Sometimes visits the Trust's open-café to check volunteers and their events because the venue of the open-café belongs to the local city council.
Yokoyama (Male)	Volunteer/ Former probation officer in family court	70s	Used to work as a probation officer in a family court, supporting many adolescents. Through Yokoyama's work experiences, he understood the importance of listening. After retiring, he thought his listening skills might be useful to help someone else, so he participated in AL workshops and started volunteering in two AL groups for seven years. He is also coaching soft tennis in a high school. Recently, his wife was diagnosed with cancer, therefore, he is reducing the number of hours he spends on coaching and volunteering.
Yanagi (Female)	Volunteer/ Former employee in a consumer information centre	70s	Worked once a week for 20 years in a local consumer information centre. Her work consisted of receiving calls from customers and finding solutions for them. After raising her children, she joined a training course to work at the consumer centre as a full-time worker, as she wanted to become more independent. Yanagi gained a qualification and worked until her retirement. After that, she wanted to contribute to local society and by chance, she came across the concept of AL. She thought that she would be able to do this volunteering because of her work experiences. She also likes listening to life stories which contain something she does not know. Yanagi joined a workshop and established the Trust with the other participants of the workshop in 2008. She is the current leader of the Trust.

Eguchi-san (Male)	Client/ Former occupation unknown	70s	Retired. Eguchi used to live with and take care of his mother. However, because of her deteriorating condition, she moved to a nursing home. He frequently visited her, but she suddenly passed away, which he could not understand or accept. Because of this incident, he started visiting several AL open-cafés.
Kondō (Female)	Volunteer/ Former employee in a patent office	68	Born in a suburb of Tokyo and graduated from the faculty of English in Sophia University in Tokyo. Kondō started working in the human resource department of a car manufacturing company. She was one of the first 4-year college graduate women to be recruited. However, because she was not able to fit the working environment as a woman, she changed her job to trademark-related work at a patent office in Marunouchi, Tokyo. She continued the job until retirement while raising two children. Furthermore, at aged 50, Kondō gained a home caregiver qualification to help her husband's work at a cram school for children with learning disabilities and who refused to attend school. She had always wanted to become a nurse, and told me, 'I was not able to make my dream come true'. In addition to her desire to become a caregiver, after retiring she worried about becoming senile, so she joined several local volunteering groups including AL and teaching children. She likes listening to old people's life stories, which is the main motivation for her to continue to participate in AL volunteering.
Kaneko-san (Female)	Client/ Wife	90s	Born in Kanto. Kaneko was raised by a very disciplined mother, which she mentioned many times in AL conversations with every volunteer. She used to work somewhere but the details are unknown. She passed away in 2019.

Appendix 2: List of observed cases with information on gender and age

1. Possible patterns of AL volunteer-client combinations

	Gender	Age	Example from my data
1	Female volunteer – female client	Younger volunteer – Older client	Kondō – Kaneko-san (see Chapter 5.2 Kondō – Miyazaki-san Kondō – Kamata-san Uchida – Izumi-san
2	Female – Female	Older – Younger	
3	Female – Female	Almost the same age	Uchida – Miyata-san
4	Male – Male	Younger – Older	Yukawa – Hasegawa-san (Chapter 4.2)
5	Male – Male	Older – Younger	
6	Male – Male	Almost the same age	Okada – Komine-san (Chapter 4.3)
7	Female – Male	Younger – Older	Akiyama, Nakajima – Morinaga-san (Chapter 4.1) Female volunteers behind a counter table – Make clients at a counter table in the Trust's café
8	Female – Male	Older – Younger	(I saw this pattern in the Trust's café, but I did not collect data.)
9	Female – Male	Almost the same age	(I saw this pattern in the Trust's café, but I did not collect data.)
10	Male – Female	Younger – Older	(I saw this pattern in the Trust's café, but I did not collect data.) (I heard that a volunteer of Fukurō used to visit a female client, but I did not observe it.)
11	Male – Female	Older – Younger	
12	Male – Female	Almost the same age	

This list indicates two aspects: first, one can see twelve patterns, even just the combinations of gender and age; second, I do not have detailed examples of 'Male volunteer – Female client'. Yukawa, a leader of Fukurō, told me that some clients requested female volunteers, but none of the clients ever asked for male volunteers.

2. Possible patterns of hostess-customer combinations

	Gender	Age
1	**Hostess/Mama – Male customer**	**Younger hostess – Older customer**
2	**Hostess/Mama – Male customer**	**Almost the same age**
3	Hostess/Mama – Male customer	Older – Younger
4	Hostess/Mama – Female customer	Younger – Older
5	Hostess/Mama – Female customer	Almost the same age
6	Hostess/Mama – Female customer	Older – Younger

Most conversations happen as a pattern of 1 or 2.

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